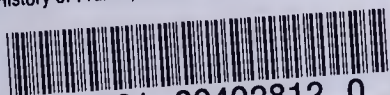


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THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
FRANCE,  
FROM THE  
MOST EARLY RECORDS,  
TO THE  
DEATH OF LOUIS XVI.

THE ANCIENT PART  
By *WILLIAM BECKFORD*, Esq.  
AUTHOR OF  
A DESCRIPTIVE ACCOUNT OF THE ISLAND OF JAMAICA.

THE MODERN PART  
BY AN ENGLISH GENTLEMAN,  
WHO HAS BEEN SOME TIME RESIDENT IN PARIS.

---

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

---

VOLUME I.

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ENRICHED WITH HISTORICAL ENGRAVINGS FROM THE ORIGINAL  
DRAWINGS OF BURNEY, CORBOULD, RILEY, RICHTER,  
DAYES, BYRON, TURNER, MOREAU, &c. &c.

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LONDON:  
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M.DCC.XCIV.







To the Rev: William Vyse, L.L.D. F.R.S.  
Rector of Lambeth, & Canon Residentiary  
of Litchfield.

Dear Sir!

As I have always acknowledged your confidence and friendship to be the pride and comfort of my life, I consider this address as a complement to my vanity, & a tribute of my gratitude; and I am only sorry that the oblation I make is so unworthy of the shrine upon which it is offered.

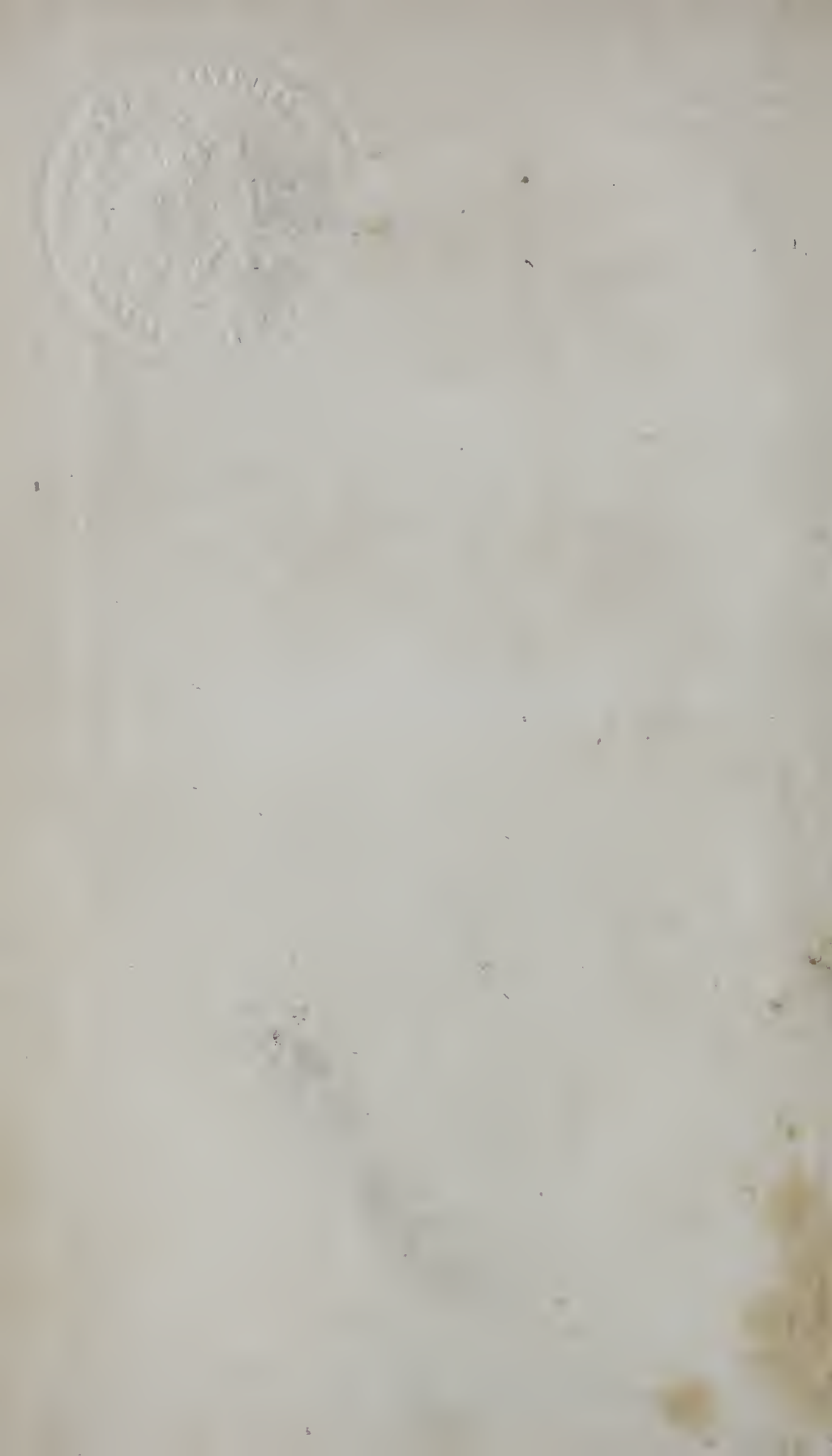
I could dwell upon those useful talents of which you are possessed, upon those elegant accomplishments by which you are distinguished; and upon those virtues of the heart by which you are respected and beloved, were I not assured that modesty is a characteristic of your nature, and that it would be needless to mention what is so generally known.

I flatter myself that, I have at least shown some discernment in setting a proper value upon your esteem; & should this Ephemera survive its day, our names will appear together upon the same page; and the friendship that is there recorded, will continue, I trust, to enliven my prospects, and to point my sentiments to him who helped to clear them.

I am, Dear Sir!

Your very faithful

and affectionate friend William Beckford.



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# P R E F A C E.

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TO revert to the beginnings of life, and to trace the progress of manners throughout its different combinations; to bring down the stream of truth unpolluted in its course, and to follow it through its various channels; has been the toil of the Naturalist and the Historian, from the most early ages in which letters began to imprint the reflections of the mind, and science to enlarge, and to analyse the ideas of man.

Some nations appear to burst forth at once with a plenitude of glory, and, like the sun, to disperse the mists of doubt and prejudice with the first expansion of its beams; while others shine out in splendour for a time, and then, resembling particular streams, disappear for ages, and are afterwards seen to glide by degrees into consequence, and at length to overspread a country with clearness and fertility.

In a history like that of France, it is more difficult to determine in what part to take up the clue, than to follow the thread of inquiry; and

been instrumental in making those better, who once were bad ;—are objects of some concernment to every community, however distant in time it may be from the period in which these salutary reformations may have chanced to happen.

We, who have leisure to trace effects from causes, and to developè the errors that have occasioned reform, should apply this axiom to ourselves ; for where is there an empire upon earth that may not profit from confusion, correct the vices of preceding times, and learn to deduce from the torrents of misery by which they have been inundated, a gentle stream to support government, and to bear it placidly through the shocks of fortune, and the storms of life ?

An historian, likewise, while he turns back his eyes upon distant events, should carefully examine by what they have been occasioned ; and should observe, if they have helped to influence the present constitution, by what channels they have proceeded to establish this acquired end ; and whether the polity of former times may have had any open or latent influence upon our prejudices, and have either weakened our former judgment, or strengthened our present mode of political thinking.

The æras of ancient history being so much involved in fable, we can deduce very little satisfaction, upon the score of information, from useless chronicles and unauthenticated records ; for if we  
shall

shall be able to extract but one clear page from the dust, by which they may be disfigured, yet superstition may stand in the place of knowledge; and from bigotry we know by fatal experience, that little is to be gotten to improve the understanding, or to amend the heart.

We should be acquainted with the character of the man, to form a just criterion of his actions; for even the personal description of a great and illustrious character, may help to interest us in his life, and deeds: we form our party from predilection, and are governed, in our partiality or disgust, by the features of a face, or the symmetry and proportion of the limbs. This, however, is a faulty standard, by which to measure the vices, or to ascertain a knowledge of the virtues of the species. Exterior forms are but rarely seen to mark the habits of the man; as well may the ornaments of dress denote the value and accomplishments of the mind.

It is but seldom that great men, but particularly kings and heroes, act up to an uniform consistency of character. We see them moderate at one time, and at another oppressive, treacherous, and vindictive. The concerns of life do not flow with them with that equability which better marks a subordinate condition. Exposed to envy, and hence to the shafts of obloquy, a peculiar caution is required in their speech and actions; and being the dispensers of emoluments and honours, their



favours are examined with invidious scrutiny ; and the partakers of their smiles, and the depositaries of their confidence, are considered as the unjust anticipaters of the royal distinctions, and soon become the objects of dislike, the victims of mortification, or the martyrs of contempt.

In the following pages we shall discern many discriminations of character, and a great variety of political changes. We shall see alternate struggles in the people for a resumption of their natural rights ; we shall behold their privileges trodden under foot, a system of tyranny arise from the ashes of despondency, and freedom at last resume its rights from the confines of the tomb.

We shall observe a great empire weakened by extension ; and armies lost, from a superfluity of numbers. We shall have frequent occasion to pause and to moralise upon the state of kingdoms, and to reflect upon the lives of men.

In examining, therefore, the events, and in relating the revolutions of France, we shall endeavour to keep ourselves unbiaſſed ; and it shall be our study to select such passages, and to enforce such maxims, as we shall conceive the most likely to elucidate the subject, and to fix upon the mind those impressions of humanity and mercy which spread a glory around the throne of the conqueror ; without dwelling with too much pertinacity of description, upon those acts of rapine and injustice, that so often disgrace the annals of the king,

king, and associate with infamy the character of the man.

We shall, at all times, studiously separate the private virtues of the heart, from the unwarrantable practices of public outrage, and successful fraud: the defects of reason indeed should be glanced over with silent notice, and pitiful concern; but those head-strong passions that lead to injustice, and when power is become the only sanction of oppression, it is the duty of the historian to expose; nor should he suffer the dread of a name to stifle the struggles of virtue, or to infringe the rights of domestic peace.

The most exalted and the most distinguished characters are subject, like ourselves, to the infirmities of nature, and to the errors of life; and the pomp that is attached to the person, and the splendour that surrounds the throne, of the monarch, are the means by which we are deprived of the opportunity of diving into, and of bringing forth to outward view, the foibles of the heart.

Religion, as it combines the various duties of life, we shall respect and venerate; and the sovereign, as the head of the church, should conscientiously consider that he is to set an example of devotion to his people; and that if, from mental confession, he cannot absolve himself from crimes, how great will be the risk of his being able to enforce, either orthodoxy in matters of  
faith,

faith, or to extort obedience in the article of government, from the unsettled conformity of others !

Upon spiritual subjects, diffusively treated, we shall not presume to dwell, excepting in those cases in which the introduction of them shall appear to be absolutely necessary ; for disputations upon matters of conscience, and scepticism upon topics in which our present comforts and future hopes are concerned, are of a nature too delicate to be introduced with levity, and to be spoken of with indifference ; and should never meet the reader's eye, but in the garb of simple virtue, and unassuming innocence.

Disputation is more apt to sour the mind than convince the understanding ; and if carried to excess, it will irritate instead of soothe : besides, religion is now become so much the theme of argumentation, that we shall leave the discussion of its errors to the polemic, and of its merits to the divine ; and yet we cannot help lamenting, in this place, that the mention of it should so often find its way into works of fancy, and should become so popular a subject of animadversion in those writings which are read with so much *avidity*, and in which the charms of style, and the elegance of diction, make amends, with some, for the want of argument, the conviction of reason, and the luminations of truth.

Feeling.



Feeling, as we do, a respect for government, when it becomes the cement of order, and the protection of right, we shall always justify that power that is given by the people, however we may be disposed to arraign that authority that is wrested from the weak by the hand of the strong; and feeling, as we do, for the natural rights of man, we shall always speak with reverence of those struggles which are the effects of public virtue; and shall record with pleasure the triumph of liberty over high-strained prerogative and despotic usurpation.

The task we have undertaken, we know, particularly at this time, to be full of difficulty and danger; but that spirit of liberality and of free inquiry that now seems to pervade the nations of Europe, encourages us to proceed in the arduous task; and as we lay no claim whatever to the public favour, but what we hope our impartiality may justify,—to that criterion, and to that alone, we cheerfully submit our pretensions, and our work.



## INTRODUCTION.

**T**HE territory now called France, was denominated by the Romans Transalpine Gaul, to distinguish it from the northern part of Italy, which they called Cisalpine Gaul.

When Rome was in the zenith of her vigour, France shared the fate of many other countries, in becoming subject to her mighty empire. France was conquered by Julius Cæsar, about forty years before the Christian æra. At that time Transalpine Gaul comprehended all the country from the Pyrenées to the Alps, and from the Rhine to the Ocean. Under Augustus it comprised seven large provinces; the Narbonnois, Aquitaine, Celtic Gaul, Lyonnois, Belgic Gaul, and the two Germanys; a district so called, extending from Leyden to Basil. These extensive territories were, before the irruption of the

barbarians, in a high degree populous, and cultivated, possessing a number of flourishing and beautiful cities that had been indebted, for their foundation, to the liberality and magnificence of the Roman Emperors.

Gaul continued in the possession of the Western Roman Empire until the fifth century, and then was subject to the Eastern Empire until the sixth century, when we find it over-run by the Goths, the Burgundians, and the Franks, who subdued, but did not extirpate the inhabitants. The two former, indeed, had been seated there a considerable time before the period in which Clovis established his dominion in that country.

The Franks, who gave it the name of France, or Frankerland, were composed of different people, originally settled in Germany, more particularly of the Salii, who were established on the banks of the River Sale, and who established a better system of judicial polity, than any of their neighbours had previously done.

After the power of the Franks and Burgundians was fully established, and the natives  
were

were reduced to a state of dependence, they parcelled out the lands among their principal leaders ; and it was found absolutely necessary, by succeeding kings, to confirm their privileges and immunities, and to suffer them to exercise a sovereign authority in their respective governments, until at length they acquired an independency, and would only consent to acknowledge the king as their head.

This resolution occasioned those numerous principalities, and the several parliaments that were afterwards established in France ; for every different province became, as well in its polity as government, an epitome of the whole kingdom ; no laws were enacted, and no tax was raised, without the concurrence of the great Council, which only consisted of the clergy and the nobility.

Thus, immediately after the dissolution of the Roman Empire in Gaul, the first governments of France seemed to be a kind of mixed monarchy, and the authority of their kings appeared to be extremely circumscribed by the feudal Barons.

From this period of time, the history of this celebrated kingdom becomes tolerably distinct and clear; and the hereditary succession of the crown from the reign of Clovis, who may be considered the first of their Sovereigns, and who established his residence in France, the legal descent of their Kings may be regularly traced, without confounding the progressive records of the Historian.

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T H E  
H I S T O R Y  
O F  
F R A N C E.

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C H A P T E R I.

FROM THE ORIGIN OF THE FRANKS UNTO THE  
DEATH OF CHILDERIC.

Origin of the Franks—their extensive irruptions—defeated by Constantius Clorus—and by Constantine—subdued by Julian—The Franks repulse the Vandals, &c.—Pharamond made King—the Franks expelled Gaul by Ætius—Clodian succeeds Pharamond—Meroveus, the successor of Clodian—Contests between Claudebaud and Meroveus—Battle of Chalons—Meroveus succeeded by Childeric—The conquests of Childeric—his death and character.


**T**HE Franks were originally a motley multitude of various nations, inhabiting the countries beyond the Rhine, and possessing, among many other tribes, a part of the Ancient Germany. They bestowed upon themselves the appellation of Franks, or Freeman; and we shall observe in the sequel how soon they lost, and how late they

A. D. again acquired, this envied distinction. They were a treacherous, a vindictive, and a cruel people. They were frequently distinguished for their numbers and their arms, and for their daring inroads into, and subsequent devastations of, the Roman Empire.

A confederation was formed in the reign of the Emperor Gordian, by the inhabitants of the Wefer and of the Lower Rhine; and the union into which they entered from necessity, they cemented from choice; and the advantages that were expected to flow from such a compact, were fondly prefaged, and successfully confirmed.

They soon spread themselves, like an inundation, augmenting their powers as they rushed along from the borders of the Rhine, until they reached the Pyrenean mountains, which opposed in vain their tremendous heights, to check their incursions, and to stem the torrent of their arms. They besieged, they took, and they sacked, the city of Tarragona; and for twelve years together, during the reign of Gallienus, they ravaged the unresisting kingdoms of Spain, and from thence they spread dismay, and overran with conquest, the burning sands and the fertile mountains of Africa.

Some years afterwards they joined the Lyges, the Burgundians, and the Vandals: they took 275. seventy-one cities in Gaul; and they were driven from

from thence into Franconia in Germany, their A. D. ancient seat, by the Imperial arms. 

A colony of these Barbarians having been established by the Emperor Probus, on the coast of the Pontus, their original ideas of liberty again returned; and possessing themselves of a fleet of ships which was at that time stationed in the harbours of the Euxine, they made their way through the Bosphorus and the Hellespont, and spread their devastations along the coasts of the Mediterranean Sea. Asia, Greece, and Africa, felt the direful effects of their descents; and the city of Syracuse was surprised, her treasure plundered, and the inhabitants were massacred, by the brutal policy and the unprovoked resentment of these ambitious people.

From this theatre of blood they directed their desolating course to the very Pillars of Hercules; they looked with contempt upon the swelling dangers of the ocean; and, embarking their defultory numbers without arrangement or discipline, they steered a prosperous course through the British Channel; and they landed triumphant, and unbroken, upon the Batavian and the Frisian shores. From thence they repaired, oppressed with booty, and weary of conquest, to the neighbourhood of the Rhine, the seat of their former independency, and now the witness of their recent glory. 277.

A. D. . The rebellion of Proculus, who at this time assumed the purple in the city of Cologne, was a temptation to revolt which the restless spirit of the Franks could not easily withstand; they accordingly espoused his cause, inflamed his ambition, and promised to second his efforts against the power of Rome: but as treachery, throughout every period of their history, appears to mark the character of this nation, they not only basely abandoned, but meanly betrayed, the person of their leader, into the hands of the Emperor.

From this period until the fourth year of the reign of Dioclesian, we do not meet with any account of civil commotions, or foreign enterprise; 280. but about that time they renounced the torpor of inaction, and entered into a confederacy with the Saxon pirates. Their success was proportioned to their numbers, and their plunder corresponded with their thirst of rapine. They overran the coasts of Gaul; they possessed themselves of a booty that was immense, and of captives sufficiently numerous to encourage their future irruptions.

Caucasius, by the command of the Emperor, equipped a fleet at Boulogne, to overawe their incursions, and to punish the insult; but as the advantages acquired over them did not amount to a defeat, they retired; and, in a manner, unbroken and undiminished, to their respective countries.

In


In the succeeding year Maximian crossed the A. D. Rhine, and entered into Germany; and such was the dread of his name, and the success of his arms, that two of their kings, and the first that are mentioned in history, Atec and Genobald, submitted to his power, and received from him a confirmation of their rights. 288.

Maximian allotted lands in Cambray and in Treves to considerable numbers of the Letes, and the Franks, those territories being desert, and of consequence in want of population: the former were originally a Gaulish nation; but having settled some time before in Germany, they were considered as Germans.

In a few years afterwards, the Franks entered into, and made themselves masters of, Batavia, and of that part of Flanders which is watered by the River Escaut, or the Scheld; but Constantius Clorus broke their forces, and overcame them in a decisive engagement: they accordingly surrendered themselves to his mercy; and, by a policy more efficacious than the sword, he transplanted a number of them with their families into Gaul, and obliged them to improve, by cultivation and by toil, those lands which they had so lately made a desert.

From this æra they continued in peace and in apparent subjection, until the first year of the reign of Constantine, in which they began fresh commotions, and prepared themselves again for



 A. D. a conflict in arms; but the Emperor having allayed the tumults in Britain, which about that time engaged his attention, he fell upon them in the hour of plunder, and having cut them off by numbers, and possessed himself of their kings, Ascaric and Gaisus, with a barbarity unworthy of a man, and inconsistent with the appellation of Great, by which he was in succeeding years distinguished, he doomed them to the degrading triumph of the populace, and to the unfeeling exhibition of the theatre.

306. His substitution of games to celebrate his conquests, but to degrade his humanity, excited resentment in their minds, and strengthened their arms for vengeance; for, two years afterwards, they assembled in numerous bodies, and with a firm design to make a formidable irruption into Gaul; but the presence of Constantine overawed their rebellion, depressed their courage, and  
308. obliged them to retire.

Not long afterwards a general confederation of all the Franks had recourse to arms; they gathered together, like a louring cloud, which for a while hangs suspended, but to burst at once with a dreadful deluge. They assembled upon the banks of the Rhine, and there, dividing their numerous troops into several detachments, they attempted to break into the various dominions of Gaul,

Constantine

Constantine marched in person, with a determination to oppose their course; but as policy A. D. has oftentimes the advantage of courage, and as suspicion is sometimes the harbinger of success, he condescended to obtrude himself, disguised, into the midst of their forces, and to feign himself to be an Ambassador from the Court of Rome: an instance of self-collection and fortitude that is not to be surpassed by any action of his reign; but at the same time such a proof of treachery as can only be justified by that crooked policy, that deems every advantage fair in matters of blood! The barbarians were deceived, and the Emperor of a polished people was successful: their confidence became their ruin, and his want of veracity became his triumph. They were put to flight, they were pursued, and massacred; and the victor not only subdued those nations which were settled upon the banks of the Rhine, and upon the borders of the ocean, but even drove them from the seat and the inheritance of their forefathers. 310.


Not discouraged, however, by this severity, they soon began to assemble again their scattered forces; but Constantine having been duly apprised of their commotions, departed immediately from Italy, and repaired with expedition to Gaul. The Franks, not having dared, as yet, to pass the river, were seen to loiter upon its banks, and then to retreat; but a report ha-

~ A. D. ving been purposely spread, and eagerly believed, that the Alemanni were also about to break into the Roman dominions, the Emperor, to favour the deception, after having left some of his troops in ambush in a neighbouring forest, with order and with silence withdrew the rest.

No sooner were they apprised of his departure, than with confidence and exultation they crossed the Rhine; nor were they suspicious of an enemy, until the Romans, rushing forth from their ambuscade, began, before the Barbarians had time to draw up their forces, a most dreadful and unresisting slaughter. They were pursued by the Emperor in person, with the whole of his army; they were obliged to pass the river in terror and confusion: he entered, and laid waste their country; he burnt their habitations; and the prisoners who were captured by this unrelenting tyrant, were exposed to the hunger, and were devoured by the fury, of the wild beasts at the public games at Rome.

How much must the honest indignation of the feeling mind be excited by such atrocious acts of cruelty and blood! and how much must the dignity of history be insulted, when we find these enormities become the subject of panegyric! For who shall dare, after such an instance of brutal severity, to honour Constantine with the character of mild, of generous, and of good? And yet such prostitutions do we find in the Roman page, as  
if



if the actions of the emperor were sacred, and A. D. were not to be sullied by the passions of the man. 

From this victory he assumed the name of Franciscus : but his inhuman policy did not subdue the Franks ; for no sooner had he retired, than they ventured once more to cross the Rhine, and to recommence their former devastations ; but, upon the approach of his son Crispus, they withdrew, and left behind them the booty they had obtained.

No particular mention is made of their incursions from this period until the fourth year of the reign of Constantius, in which they broke into Gaul, and made their accustomed ravages in that country. Constans marched against them, and they were either appeased by his policy, or conquered by his arms. 341.

During the government of Julian, they again had recourse to their former insults ; and alternate success and defeat attended their invasions, until at length they were entirely subdued ; and they continued in peace and tranquillity throughout the remainder of his reign. 355.

No event of singular importance to this nation seems to have transpired until that period in which the Vandals and the Sueves conspired together to disturb the tranquillity of Gaul ; but in this enterprise they were vigorously opposed by the

A. D. the armies of the Franks, who harassed their numbers, defeated their strength, and gave up twenty thousand of the former, with their King Godegisiles, 406. to the edge of the sword; and they would all have been cut off by one indiscriminate carnage, had not the Alans, who were likewise their allies, perceived their distress, and come boldly forward to succour their weakness, and prevent their fate.

About this period of time it is supposed that Pharamond, the first king of the nation, wielded his sceptre over the Franks, of whom some contend that Sunno, and others that Marcomir, was the father. He reigned ten years, in the last of which 428. the celebrated Ætius commenced a war against them, and entirely expelled them from those places which they had usurped.

Clodian succeeded his father, Pharamond, in the fourth year of the reign of Valentinian the Third; and some events of consequence occurred at that period. He marched with his army to Cambray, which he took, and, for a time, preferred as his place of residence. From thence he made an irruption into the province of Artois, but was surpris'd and defeated by Ætius and Majorianus at Lens: notwithstanding this discomfiture, he extended his conquests as far as the river Somme; and he made himself master of Amiens and Tournay. The Roman General some time afterwards concluded a peace with the Franks, and left them in the quiet possession of  
of

of a portion of the country which they had lately A. D. subdued.

Clodian reigned about twenty years, and was succeeded by Meroveus, whom some historians call the kinsman, some, the brother of his predecessor; while there are others who contend that he was of a different family; but he is generally supposed to have been his son. It must not, however, be forgotten, that from him was deduced the line of the Merovingean Kings. 448.

A misunderstanding took place, soon after the death of the father, between the sons: the younger was assisted by the Romans; and the elder, Claudebaud, was supported by Attila, whose numerous and powerful troops consisted of the Rugians, the Heruli, the Thuringians, the Gepidæ, the Ostrogoths, and those nations of the Franks who were subject to his empire. With this army he poured into Gaul, but was repulsed at Orleans by the Læti, the Armoricans, the Saxons, the Sarmatians, or those Alans who had been permitted to settle in the district of Valence, the Burgundians, the Franks of Meroveus, and by the King of the Visigoths, and his son Torrismond, and by the Roman General Ætius. The Gepidæ engaged with the Franks, and sustained a loss of fifteen thousand men; but this was only a prelude to one of the most celebrated and bloody battles that is recorded in history, for in that of Chalons two hundred and fifty-two thousand

A. D. thousand men are said to have perished. Theodoric was killed, and Attila with great difficulty  
451. escaped under covert of the night; and in a few days these numerous armies dispersed, and, like a breaking cloud, scarcely left the traces of their passage behind.

All that we can gather respecting Meroveus, is, that he was highly esteemed by his subjects when living, and sincerely lamented when he died; of which facts there need not be adduced a more convincing proof, than that veneration for his name which caused them to apply it to their succeeding kings. He was succeeded by his son Childeric, who, when a youth, was taken prisoner, with his mother, and other persons of distinction,  
456. by the better fortune of Attila, but who was delivered from captivity by the zeal and fidelity of Wiomald, a Frank.

His ambition was inflamed by royalty; and he no sooner wielded the sceptre, than he poised the sword. His own dominions were not sufficiently large to content his aspiring soul, and he consequently meditated, and began an attack upon those of others. His rival in the field, and the terror of the Franks, the illustrious Ætius, was now no more; and as he had neither his prudence to apprehend, nor his courage to fear, he silenced the scruples of his conscience by the vigour of his arm.



He extended his conquests, and he carried terror and dismay as far as the river Loire; and, after a siege of great length, he rendered himself the master of the city of Paris; and Angers, as well as Orleans, fell likewise into his victorious hands. He entered some time afterwards into an alliance with Odoacer, the King of the Heruli, who had made himself the master of Italy; and marching against the Alemanni, who had commenced hostilities in that country, he routed their forces, and he obtained a signal defeat.

A. D.

470.

Soon after his return, he had cause to lament the futility of conquest, and the shortness of life; he died at Tournay, and left behind him the character of a sensualist without discrimination, of a king despised by his nobles for his want of principle, and detested by his people on account of his extortion and extravagance.

In consequence of the licentiousness of his intrigues, he had been early in his reign expelled the throne, and obliged to forsake his country; but his subjects, forgetting his irregularities in his absence, restored him to his dignity and his power, which, during his exile, had been conferred by the Franks upon Ægidius, the general of the Roman forces in Gaul.

It may be necessary in this place to observe that Meroveus and Childeric had never established their residence in that country, but only from time to time had made irruptions from Germany;

A. D. many; but being satisfied with plunder, or checked in their depredations, or beaten back by the Romans, they returned to the other side of the Rhine, until the enterprising Clovis, after having passed this river at the head of a veteran army, first laid the foundation of the French Monarchy.

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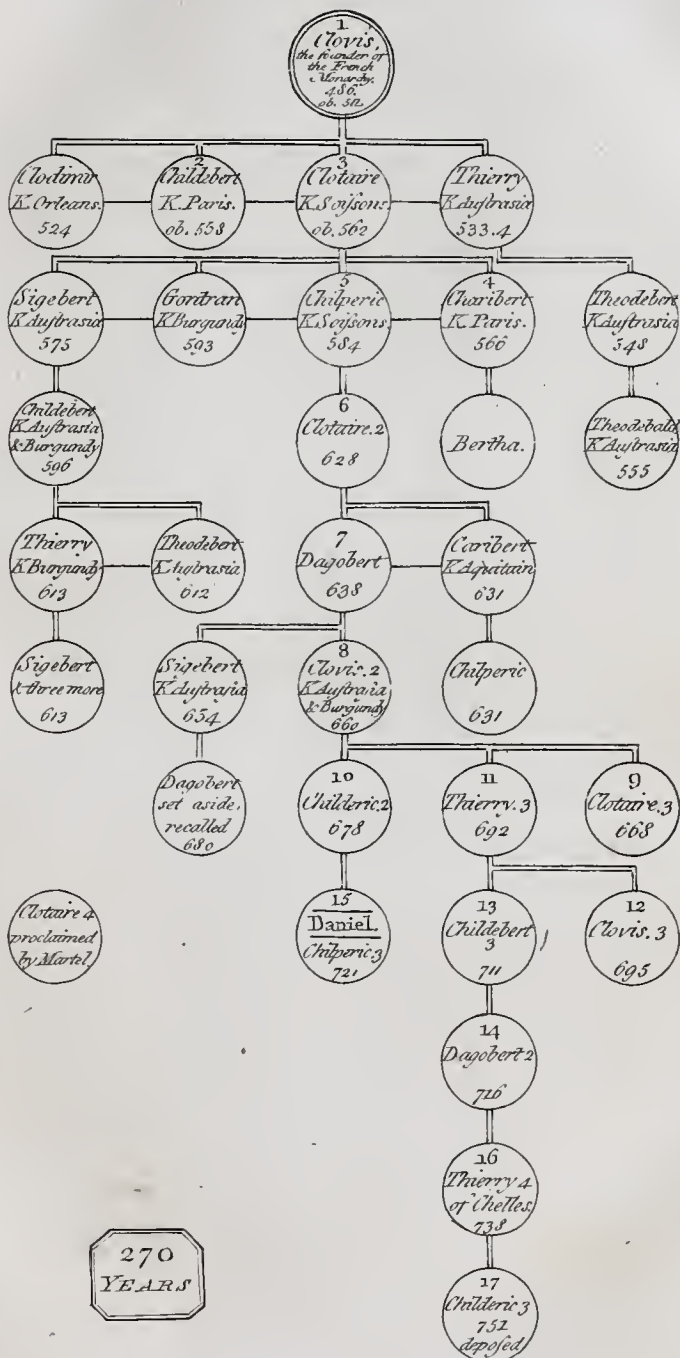
## CHAPTER II.

FROM THE DEATH OF CHILDERIC TO THE  
DEATH OF CLOVIS.

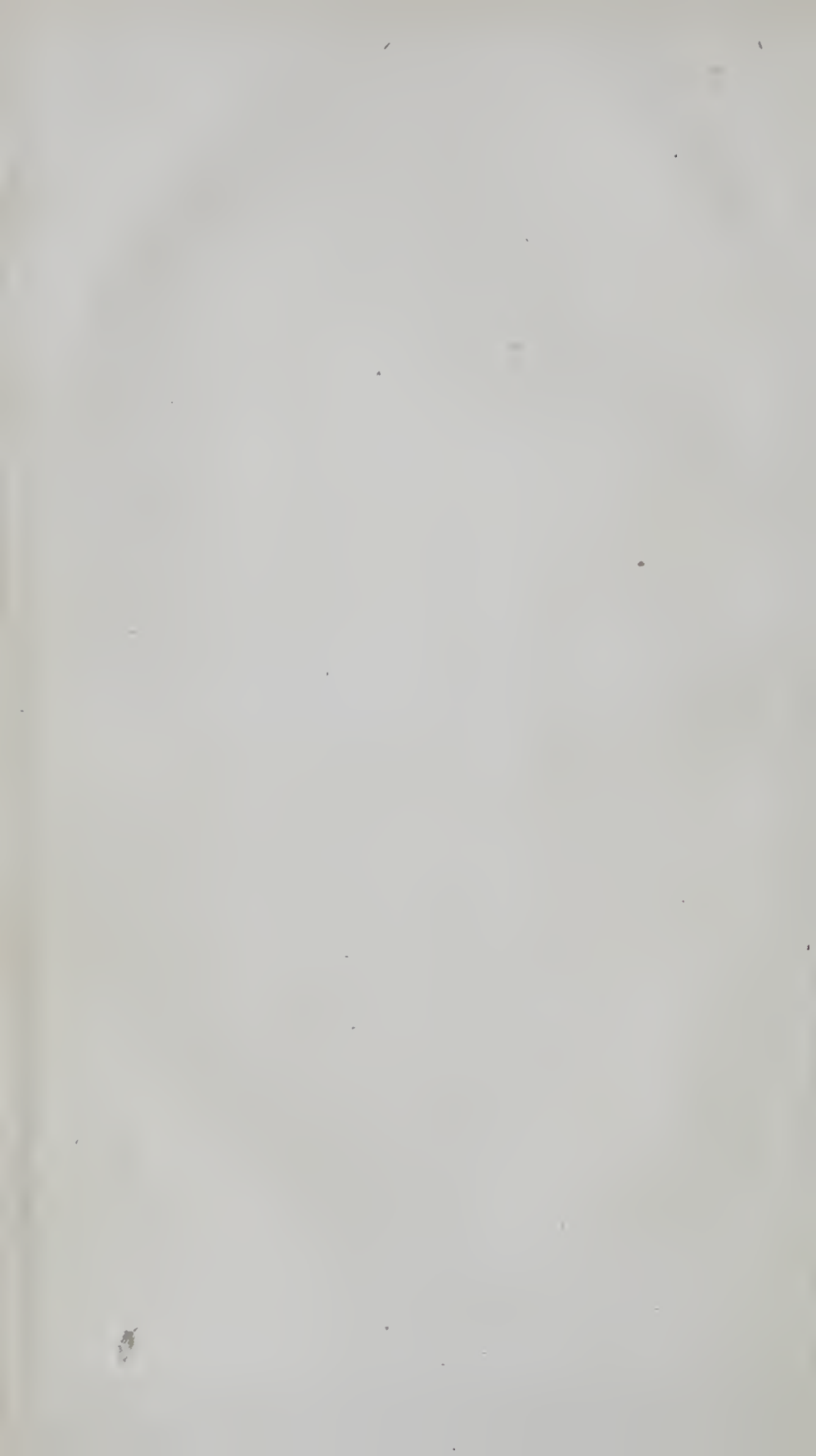
Clovis, Clodovæus, Ludovicus, or Lewis, succeeds Childeric—State of Gaul at this period—Expedition of Clovis into Gaul—Syagrius defeated at Nogens—Roman power in Gaul destroyed—Clovis married to Clotildis—Battle of Tolbiac—Conversion of Clovis from Paganism to Christianity—Armorici unite with the Franks—Battle of Dijon—Gondebald retakes Vienne—Overthrow of the Visigoths at Vouglé—Siege of Arles—Defeat of Clovis by Hibba—Peace between Clovis and Theodoric—Clovis elected Consul of Rome—The dominions of Sigebert, Chararic, Ragnacharius, and Regnomer, annexed to those of Clovis—The death of Clovis—his character.

482. **C**LOVIS, upon the death of Childeric his father, was but fifteen years of age : his dominions were extremely circumscribed, as his authority only extended





270  
 YEARS



extended over the isles of the Batavians, and the A. D. ancient dioceses of Arras and Tournay: and his banners, waving to the wind, and inviting conquest, were followed by the willing obedience of his compatriots, and by the warriors who, although governed by the independent Kings of the Merovingean race, were anxious to share his dangers, as certain to partake his glory.

At the time of this expedition of Clovis, the kingdoms of Gaul were divided between the Romans, the Visigoths, and the Burgundians. The Roman territories comprehended, with little exception, the different provinces which lie between the Rhine, the Loire, and the sea. The Burgundians were in quiet possession of the countries that are situated between the Rhone and the Soane, and of the several towns and villages which were seated on both sides of these rivers, and among which were to be particularly remarked the cities of Lyons, Vienne, and Geneva. The Visigoths retained all the rest of the country from the Alps to the Pyrenean mountains, which lie to the southward of the Loire; and a considerable part of Spain was likewise comprehended in their domains. Ragnacharius, and Chararic, were likewise sovereigns of the Franks; but their jurisdiction extended over different tribes, and were not only independent of Clovis, but independent of each other.

Such

A. D. Such was the position of affairs in that part of Europe, when Clovis was joined by the kindred and assembled tribes of the Franks, who were settled along the borders of the Scheld, the Meuse, the Rhine, and the Moselle, and who, attracted by his superior merit, and anticipating his courage and his conduct, had associated themselves with his fame, to be partakers of his fortune. He was met by Syagrius, the son of Ægidius, who had established a free and a respectable sovereignty, and who was possessed, at this period of time, of Soissons, Rheims, Troyes, Beauvais, and Amiens, with the title of King; and which dignity he possibly usurped during the anarchy that prevailed in Gaul.

The ambition of Clovis had led him to hope for the capture of the city of Soissons, of which his envy to Syagrius could not bear to see him possessed; he therefore invited Ragnacharius, and Chararic, to second his enterprise; which the former readily did; but which the latter politically declined, that he might go over, like the bat in the fable, to that party which might prove the most successful.

Clovis having been, therefore, joined by his kinsman, he set forward with his army to accomplish his projected invasion; and being posted in the neighbourhood of the city, he sent a defiance to Syagrius to meet him in the field. The challenge

lence was accepted, the troops engaged, and victory for some time paused before she condescended to crown with laurel either party. A. D.

The battle was not equally disputed; for the superior discipline, and the firmness and intrepidity of the Franks, were an overmatch for the disorderly attacks of a promiscuous multitude; and the Roman chief was defeated and overcome at Nogens, about ten miles from Soissons.

In consequence of this victory, the dominions of Syagrius fell into the hands of the conqueror; to whom, independently of the places above recited, the cities of Sens, Provence, and Auxerre, intimidated by his success, and dreading his resentment, willingly opened their gates, and bent beneath the power of his arms.

The unfortunate Syagrius was constrained to abandon the field, and to fly to the Court of Toulouse, where he obtained at first a willing refuge from Alaric the king of the Visigoths; but who, dreading the displeasure of Clovis, delivered him up to his ambassadors. He was kept some time in confinement; but so soon as the reduction of Soissons was accomplished, he was not only bereaved of his throne, but likewise furnished a melancholy example of the caprice of fortune, upon a scaffold.

While he was busily employed in settling the government of his newly-acquired dominions, the King of Thuringia, or Tongres, Basinus by name,

A. D. fell upon his German territories, and constrained him to repass the Rhine.

492.

He had now been married some years to Clotildis, a woman of exquisite sense and beauty, and the daughter of Childeric, the king of the Burgundians; and as she was a rigid defender of the Roman Catholic faith, and was singularly exemplary in her piety and devotion, we shall shortly see what effect her spiritual converse, assisted by the sweetness of her manners, had wrought upon the wavering mind of Clovis, and how they contributed at last to influence his resolves, and to hasten his conversion. Her endeavours to shake his religious sentiments were not at first attended with success; on the contrary, his zeal had been depressed by the fate of his children, the eldest of whom, Ingomer, was taken off by sickness soon after he was baptized; and the dangerous indisposition of his second son, still added doubt to the unsettled purpose of his mind.

About this time the Alemanni, who possessed a great part of Switzerland, and who were considered as the most warlike of the German nations, had begun to spread themselves, like a torrent, over the different kingdoms of Gaul; but they more particularly inundated the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine: the disorders, besides, which they had committed in Cologne, had excited the resentment of Clovis, and made him hasten to punish their audacity, and to relieve  
Sigebert,



Sigebert, his relation and ally, with whom he A. D.  
effected a junction, ambitious to seize every opportunity that might offer, to signalize his courage, to extend his power, and to inure his men to the fatigues, and reconcile them to the dangers of war.

The armies arrived in sight of each other, upon the plains of Tolbiac, about twelve miles from Cologne. The battle began with fury, and continued on both sides doubtful; but Sigebert having received a wound in his leg, the Franks gave way, and their line was broken; which Clovis no sooner perceived, than he seemed to pause from conflict; and lifting up his eyes with devotion to heaven, he emphatically called upon the name of Christ, at the same time promising to establish in him his future religious faith, should their armies be crowned with success. A new courage seemed now to nerve his arm, and his heart was buoyed up with the hopes of victory. His conduct, as occasion required, either animated, or restrained, the ardour of his troops: he restored by his skill, and he inspired by his example, the resolution of the desponding host. They returned to the charge; and, as if invigorated by a superior energy, they fell with resistless slaughter upon those who ventured to oppose them, and thus effaced by a dreadful carnage the temporary disgrace in which they had been lately involved.

A. D. In this decisive battle the King of the Alemanni was cut to pieces, and with him a prodigious number of his nobles and his people; a disaster which so entirely crushed their hopes, and sunk them to despair, that they submitted at once to a power which they could not any longer oppose. At the request of the King of the Ostrogoths, who had married his sister Albofleda, Clovis withdrew from the pursuit of the Alemanni, many of whom were afterwards settled in the provinces of Rhætia and Noricum; and some were transplanted into Italy by Theodoric, where, under his mild government, and fostered by his amiable manners, they lived contented, and without regretting their native country, which they were constrained to abandon.

496.

The vow which he had made in the field, the King of the Franks now determined to ratify upon the altar; and in the fullness of his religious zeal, he made his queen acquainted with his solemn invocation; acknowledging with sincerity, that to this was due, and to this alone, his recent victory.

Clotildis endeavoured to strengthen, as it may be easily imagined, his religious fervor, and looked forward with impatience to that hour in which he was to become orthodox, by a renunciation of error; and she, accordingly, dispatched a messenger to Remigius, the bishop of Rheims, to acquaint him with the holy purpose. The venerable







venerable Prelate was received with every possible A. D. mark of external respect, and with the humble appearance of internal devotion; and the royal profelyte being moved by the pathetic exhortations of his eloquent instructor, renounced the worship of the gods of his forefathers, to subscribe to the tenets, and to conform to the religious duties of the church of Rome. This awful ceremony was performed in the sixteenth year of his reign, with unexampled magnificence and splendor, in the cathedral church of Rheims, in which the succeeding Kings of France have been uniformly anointed and crowned.

It has been pretended that the passion and death of the Redeemer of the world had very sensibly touched the mind of Clovis with pity and concern, and that his sufferings in life, and the pangs he was made to endure when he was about to resign it for the salvation of mankind, had excited his resentment, and caused him to break forth, with emphatic rage, into the following ejaculation—"Had I been present with my valiant and obedient Franks, I would, upon the spot, have avenged the daring injuries."

Clovis was at this period the only Catholic prince in the Roman world. Anastasius the emperor of the East, Theodoric the king of the Ostrogoths in Italy, Alaric, the king of the Visigoths, and of the most considerable part of Spain, with the Kings of the Burgundians, and of the



*u* A. D. Vandals in Africa, were all professors of the doctrine of Arius; but the other Sovereigns of the Franks, who were settled in Gaul, remained attached to their old religion of Paganism; and it is not to be wondered at, therefore, if Anastasius the Second, the Bishop of Rome, and several others of the same communion, addressed letters to him of congratulation upon this event, and with sincerity and joy applauded his conversion.

498. The Armorici, who were settled on the banks of the ocean, between the Loire and the Seine, and who had some time since renounced the authority, and set at defiance the tyranny of Rome, and had formed themselves into a republic, now submitted to the government of the Franks; and as the few Roman troops that now remained, perceived that they were, in consequence of this formidable junction, almost surrounded on every side by enemies not less powerful than numerous; and not being willing to serve under the Visigoths and the Burgundians, whom they detested because they were Arians, they immediately agreed to a capitulation with them, and with the Armorici; and making a formal surrender of the places of which they had possessed themselves, they spontaneously entered into their service, and became, as it were, one people; and thus was a total end put to the Roman dominions in Gaul. The year after this celebrated union had been effected,



effected, Theodoric, the king of Italy, was desirous to recover that part of Gaul now held by the Burgundians; he accordingly invited Clovis, whose influence he dreaded, but whose power he was anxious to secure, to second his schemes, and thus render successful his enterprise. A. D.

They were to fall at the same time upon the Burgundians; and, if the issue should prove successful to both, the dominions for which they contended were to be equally divided between them; but, if either party should fail in the promised engagement, that he should be subject to a pecuniary fine.

Gondebald, and his brother Godegisiles, held an equal empire over the Burgundians; they were possessed of the province of Marseilles, and of the country that stretched across the borders of the Rhone, and that were in the neighbourhood of the Saone. These Princes, as well as their subjects, were determined Arians; but, as an unhappy misunderstanding subsisted between them, the latter concluded a private alliance with Clovis, whose intrepidity was unimpeached, and whose armies were distinguished for discipline and courage.

As personal engagements seemed in this celebrated reign to be merely mercenary, it is not surprising that justice should give way to interest, and that treachery should have its price; and conforming therefore to this wicked policy, a

A. D. contract was made, the articles of which were to be written, in blood. It was intended that Godegifiles should get entire possession of his brother's rights, and that the transfer of the whole power to his person should be requited by the payment of an annual tribute to the Franks.

When once he had determined upon an enterprise, it was not in the nature of Clovis to delay its accomplishment; for the activity of his body appeared upon all occasions to correspond with the vigour of his mind. He collected his army, he took the field, and he rushed like a whirlwind into the dominions of Gondebald, who, not aware of the perfidious conduct of his brother, dispatched a messenger to entreat his assistance; which Godegifiles, to make his iniquity the more apparent, and to convince us that a man initiated into vice, soon becomes hardened against virtue, superadded the meanness of promise to the infamy of deceit.

The two armies had scarcely entered into action, when Gondebald had reason to discover the falsehood in the treason, and to find himself opposed by an enemy whom he expected with succours, as a friend; so that, finding himself abandoned in his hopes, and beset by enemies whom he could not encounter, he was constrained to retire from the unequal contest, and to leave his competitors masters of the field. The battle was fought in the vicinity of Dijon; and from thence  
the


the unsuccessful and dispirited Gondebald repaired to, and shut himself up in, the city of Avignon; in consequence of which, his brother seized at once upon his dominions, and caused himself to be proclaimed, at Vienne, the successor of his kingdom. As for Theodoric, he kept aloof from the scene of contest, and, having paid the fine, got possession of Marseilles and of its dependent territories. The unfeeling Clovis was not contented with victory, but thirsted for blood; and the unfortunate Gondebald would have fallen a sacrifice to his vengeance, had not Aridius, his minister, exerted his talents, which were not only conciliating, but persuasive, in his behalf, and pleaded with so much rhetoric, that the mind of the conqueror seemed to open to the reasonings of truth, and he suffered his discomfited enemy to remain unmolested in his retreat, in consideration of an allowance of a yearly tribute.

We now find that he who is treacherous himself, may be likewise circumvented; for no sooner had Clovis returned to his own dominions, than Gondebald, with secrecy and expedition, assembled what forces he could collect, and marched with all possible celerity to the walls of Vienne, and having explored his way, with a chosen band of followers, through the dangerous passage of an aqueduct, he gained at length the centre of the town; and his unexpected appearance had such an effect upon the inhabitants,

A. D. inhabitants, and upon the garrison, that their fears overcame their prudence, and supposing that the city was in the hands of the assailants, they were stricken with terror and despair, and betook themselves, for personal safety, to the asylum of the church; but here the sacred altars were violated, and Godegfiles was, by his brother's command, as was likewise a bishop who had fondly hoped to find a refuge in the sacred sanctuary, put to death. The head that wore the mitre, might have been spared; but the treachery of Godegfiles deserved its fate!

An inconsiderable body of Franks, that had been attached to his person, and were determined to share his fortune, had thrown themselves into a tower, with a determination to defend it to the last extremity; but being at length obliged to submit, the victorious Gondebald was contented with their surrender; and, perhaps admiring their fidelity, disdained to punish. They were disarmed, and were sent in this condition to Alaric, the king of the Visigoths; but the senators, and the principal nobility, who had abandoned his rights, and who had acquiesced in the usurpation of his brother, he ordered to be cut off by the executioner.

By the death of Godegfiles, the various provinces ~~that~~ that he held became subject to the power of Gondebald, who thereupon established a new code of laws, in favour of his Roman subjects,

subjects, by which they were to be hereafter A. D. exempted from the oppressions of the Burgundians. 

As most of the nations of Gaul were now ambitious to live under the government of the Franks, it is natural to suppose that they admired the policy of Clovis, or that they dreaded the vigour of his arms; and, setting aside his ambition, and the cruelties which resulted from usurpation, it must reluctantly be confessed that he was a wise and a successful prince, and that his head was as fruitful of expedients, as his courage was tremendous in the hour of trial; nor can it be denied that his conversion appeared to have a considerable influence upon his public actions, although it could not be perceived that it helped in any particular manner to soften the native obduracy of his mind. It can scarcely be believed that his zeal was sincere, if he suffered political motives to overcome those more material obligations with which the doctrines of Christianity ought to have inspired him; and if he forbore to make visible, by external moderation, that change which ought to have taken place in his heart.

If the pathetic recital of the miseries of our Saviour had really penetrated into his soul, how can we reconcile to the benevolent maxims he taught, a conduct so very repugnant to his life and example? for we shall be disposed to suspect  
the




A. D. the integrity of his feelings, if, while he was contemplating the painful particulars of such a death, he could, as will be seen in the sequel, become the scourge of thousands.

He affected indeed to acknowledge the truth of the Gospel, and he laid some stress upon his attention to the duties of the church: but the benevolent doctrines inculcated by the Scriptures, had but little effect upon his rude and barbarous mind; for it appeared that his thoughts were perpetually employed in the means to aggrandise his dominions, and to extend his power; and this, not only without reserve, and without compunction, but in open violation of justice and honour, and by the abuse of every moral and religious duty.

The thirst of empire, and the effervescence of religious enthusiasm, had operated so strongly upon his feelings, that he proposed to his nobles, and urged to his warriors, in the city of Paris, a project which he had formed against the Visigoths; and breaking out apparently into a pious frenzy, he thus addressed the surrounding people: "What! shall I suffer the Arians to  
" possess the most fertile provinces of Gaul?—  
" No! let us call upon the name, and invoke the  
" aid of God! let us march with zeal and confidence to give them battle; and, after having  
" obliged them to lay down their arms, and  
" taken



“ taken possession of their country, let us annex A. D.  
“ for ever their dominions to our own!” 

As the power of the Franks became now respectable, and as the martial character of Clovis almost stood without a competitor, they did not think it necessary to observe any longer the treaty into which they had entered with Theodoric: but, without dread of opposition, and foreseeing the happy consequences of their ambition, they made war, without provocation, and without notice, upon Alaric, the king of the Visigoths.

This prince, thunderstruck at the unexpected procedure, was no sooner made acquainted with their hostile intentions, than he had recourse to the power of Theodoric, and at the same time entreated his succour. He accordingly put his troops in motion, and marched in person at their head.

The Visigoths no sooner received intelligence that the enemy began to appear in the frontiers of Poitou, than they immediately posted themselves under the works of Poitiers, the capital of the province, and there remained some time within the entrenchments, awaiting with eager expectation the arrival of the Ostrogoths: but the army, full of resentment for what they deemed an act of cowardice, and confident, not only of their courage but their numbers, and setting at defiance the boasted superiority of the Franks, in discipline

A. D. discipline and valour, imprudently obliged the reluctant Alaric to engage before the junction with the Ostrogoths was effected. Clovis continued his march; and coming within sight of the enemy, in the plains of Vouglé, about ten miles from Poitiers, he gave the Visigoths a total overthrow. The intrepid soul of Alaric despising the suggestions of fear, and the disgrace of flight, pushed bravely forward to meet his antagonist; and, scorning to die a common death, he fell conquered indeed, but not disgraced, by the invincible arm of his assailant.

This decisive battle was marked by a prodigious carnage; and those troops which had the good fortune to escape, were obliged to seek refuge in their fortified towns, and in other places of safety.

It is reported that Clovis distinguished himself by extraordinary acts of valour, and was at one time in imminent danger of being captured by two of the guards of Alaric, while he was in personal conflict with that king; but his breastplate being proof against their lances, as was his bosom against dismay, he owed his escape not less to chance than to courage. The consternation into which the Visigoths were thrown by the defeat of their troops, and the despondency that overcast their minds, in consequence of the death of their king, were advantages which the policy of his rival knew how to turn to the best account; he

he accordingly dispatched his son Thierry, to A. D. reduce the Albigeois, together with the district of Rouergne, and Auvergne; while, with the remainder of the army, he marched to the siege of Carcassonne; but being informed that the King of the Ostrogoths was repairing to the relief of the place, he was unwilling to hazard the event of a battle, and he consequently thought it more prudent to retire: in his retreat, however, he made himself master of that part of Gaul which lies between the Rhone and the ocean, or, in other words, of the two provinces of Aquitaine.

After this expedition he fixed his winter-quarters in the city of Bourdeaux, in which he deposited a great portion of the treasures of Alaric, that he had seized upon at Thoulouse, and from whence he had given orders to have it removed.

At the commencement of the spring he again took the field, and laid siege to, and soon possessed himself of, the city of Angoulême; and from thence the Franks and Burgundians advanced to the city of Arles, which it was of the utmost importance to their affairs to reduce, as, by the capture of this place, all communication between the province which the Ostrogoths possessed in Gaul, and that portion of Narbonne which was held by the Visigoths, would be effectually cut off.

The Visigoths made a firm and intrepid stand, and their resistance was long and unremitted. The  
Franks

A. D. Franks were at length constrained to retire; and they were consequently obliged to cross the river in boats, and join the Burgundians, who were at present their allies, and who were encamped upon the opposite side. The siege lasted some time; and the inhabitants suffered greatly by sickness and famine, and were reduced at last to the most affecting extremities. The Franks were obliged, however, to retire before the troops of Theodoric, which he had sent to succour the place; and their armies, and those of the Burgundians, were terribly harassed by the Visigoths in their retreat, who made a great slaughter of their numbers, and possessed themselves of an equal proportion of captives.

The King of the Ostrogoths had long endeavoured, but unsuccessfully, to maintain, as a pretended mediator, the independency of Gaul; and being influenced by a religion very different in its tenets from that of the King of the Franks, he had spiritual as well as political motives to induce him to oppose the ambitious designs of his rival, and to make him anxious to preserve the remaining possessions of the Visigoths uninjured and unbroken.

He declared himself the guardian, and he avowed himself the protector, of his grandson Amalaric, the infant son of Alaric; and to evince the sincerity of his intentions, he sent, the year after his success at Arles, his general, Hibba, against



against the armies of Clovis, who gained a memorable victory over the Franks, and of whom A. D.  
509. it is said that thirty thousand lost their lives in the field of battle: thus was the Gallic monarch constrained to retreat, with a disgrace proportionably great, in comparison of his former successes.

To the tumults of arms we now find succeed the tranquillity of peace. A treaty was concluded between Theodoric and the King of the Franks, in which the latter was to keep the possession of the countries which he had wrested from the Visigoths: the power and the influence of that nation became consequently very considerably impaired; for if we except the city of Narbonne, and a few others within the district of that metropolis, they had now, after this dismemberment, very little interest in Gaul.

The Sovereign of the Ostrogoths, on the contrary, besides preserving to himself the city of Arles, as a deposit for the expences which he had incurred during the war, continued the master of the province he before possessed, and which was situated between the Alps, the Mediterranean, the Rhone, and the Durance: and he ruled over, as guardian to Amalaric, their king, all the dominions of the Visigoths, that had been preserved by the vigour of his arms.

The terms of agreement being now finally adjusted, Clovis repaired to Tours, where he re-



A. D. 510. received a solemn embassy from the Emperor Anastasius, with the symbols and distinctions of the Consulship; a mark of respect to which he was inclined, from the report of his martial achievements, and from the political hope that he would form a barrier to oppose the power of Theodoric, with whom he happened to be at this time at variance; for the Ostrogoths had seized upon Pannonia, and the Romans were ravaging the coasts of Italy.

Having received the presents, and the rescript of his election, he entered the church of St. Martin, and there received the tunic and the vest, the ensigns of the consular dignity; and from thence he rode to the cathedral, his head being encircled by a splendid diadem, the air resounding, as the procession past, with the joyful acclamations of Consul, and Augustus.

By these personal distinctions, however flattering they may be to human pride, his authority was by no means augmented; but the Romans considered it as an object of triumph, as they had always been disposed to revere, almost to idolatry, the consular title; and the Emperor, by these marks of cordiality and favour, not only applauded his conquests, but appeared to crave the future support of his arms.

The character of this ambitious tyrant became at this period fully developed; for the ties of consanguinity, the precepts of morality, and more than  
than

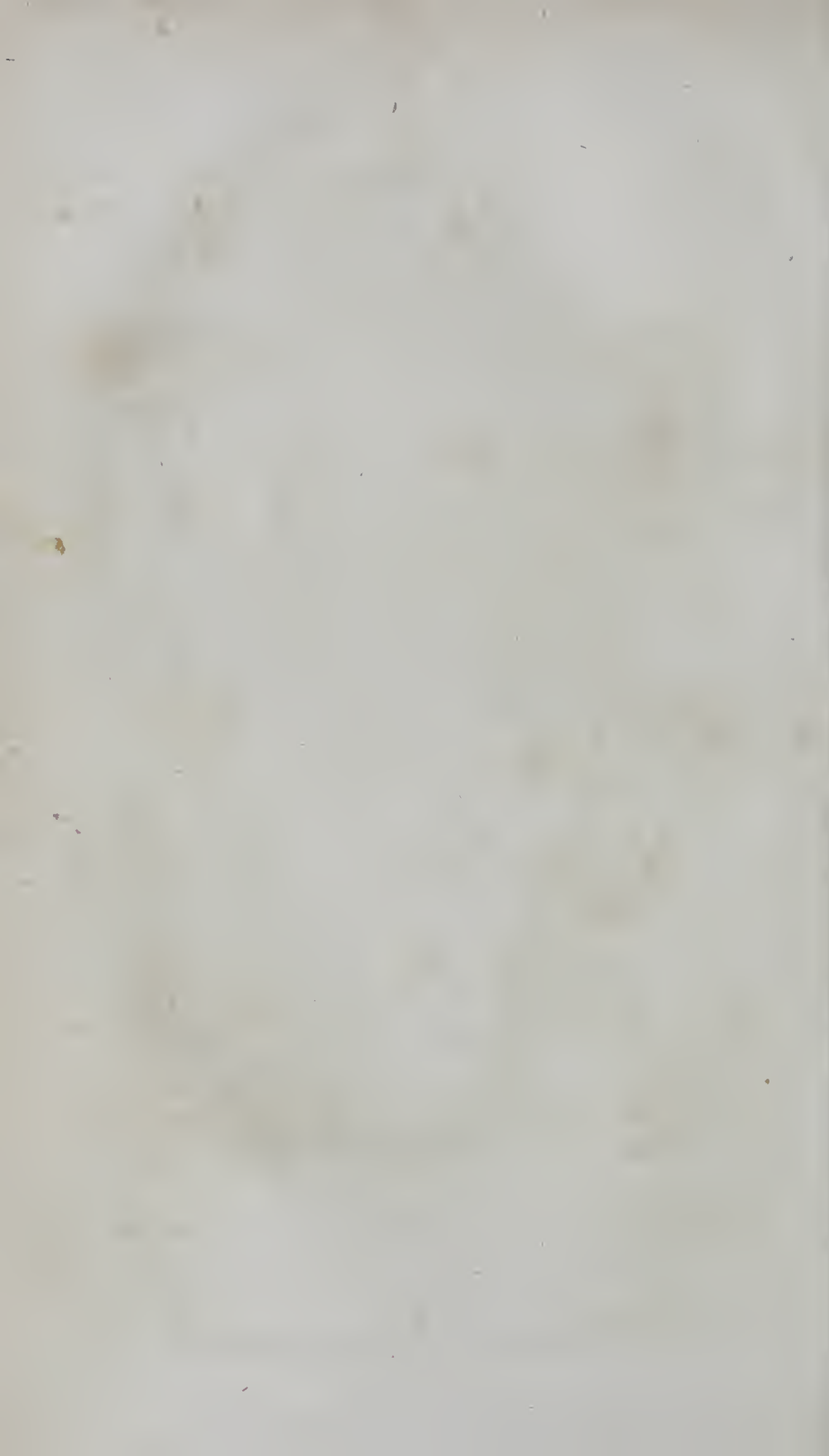


CLOVIS  
entering the Cathedral of Tours  
in Triumph.

Buancy del.

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Angus sculp.



than all, the sacred duties of religion, were not A. D.  
a sufficient counterpoise to the overwhelming  
ambition that was evidently a natural instinct in  
his mind; and we shall record with horror and  
indignation, the means he put in practice to render  
successful his treachery, and to cement his victo-  
ries by rapine and by blood.

Clovis, as we have already related, had considerably enlarged his dominions by the acquisition of those territories which he had wrested from the Visigoths: to possess and to be contented, was not an axiom of his politics; but to extend by any means, either agreeable or discordant to justice, was the principle of his life, and the reproach of his reign.


Possessing, as he already did, so extensive an empire, he was ambitious to be acknowledged the sole sovereign of those other nations of the Franks who were governed by their own princes; and by this accession to establish a kingdom so powerful, that the future convulsions of justice or ambition would be unable to shake.

During the time that he resided at Paris, which, after his return from Tours, he had established as his place of residence, and the capital of his empire, he represented, by his emissaries, to Clodoric, the son of Sigebert, that as his father was now depressed by the weight of years, and as he likewise laboured under many natural and bodily infirmities, he was of course unequal to the



A. D. cares of empire, and to the government of his people; and that as kingdoms are not to be supported by the weakness of age, it consequently became his duty, who was in the vigour of life, to put himself at the head of affairs. The unguarded son too willingly imbibed the pernicious poison; and, deluded by the promise of Clovis, and depending upon his assistance, in a weak, or an ambitious moment, consented to be a parricide, to become a king. The time of repose was seized upon as the most favorable to the views of the assassins, and the grey hairs of the venerable parent, by a mandate not less cruel than unnatural, were clotted with blood; but as it is seldom, so inquisitive is justice, that acts of signal atrocity escape their punishment, the guilty Clodoric, after having revealed the assassination, was, by the command of the King of the Franks, prematurely consigned to fate. The villains who were sent upon this bloody errand, desired him to explore one of the chests in which the treasure of the late monarch had been deposited; when coming behind him, as he was stooping down to examine its contents, a battle-axe was levelled at his head, and dashed out his brains: he thought it prudent, however, to deny his knowledge of the crime; and he pretended that the father had been taken off by the cruelty of the son, and that the parricide had fallen a victim



victim to his guilt, and had been blasted in the A. D. act of perpetration by the visitation of heaven. 


The subjects of Sigebert, whom he had warily assembled on this occasion, gave credit to his assertions; and his harangue appeared to make a deep impression upon their minds, when he offered himself as a successor to his dominions; and, after a short pause, he was saluted with the shouts and approbation of the attending multitude, who now looked up to him as their future protector, and who swore an allegiance to his government, and crown. The accession of territory which he gained by this unjustifiable measure, was that part of Gaul which extended, on the west of the Rhine, as far as the River Fuld, and on the east to the city of Chalons upon the Marne, and the metropolis of which was the celebrated Cologne.

The possession of the dominions of Chararic, the king of those Franks whose dominions extended over the country in which were situated Boulogne, St. Omers, Ghent, and Bruges, was another field for the cruel politics of Clovis. The refusal of that prince to join him in his war against Syagrius, that he might abide the event of the battle, and join the successful party, was a sufficient crime to call down his displeasure; and he seized without provocation upon his person, and upon that of his son.

A. D. As the father was, one day, lamenting his cruel destiny, and inveighing against the unmerited barbarity of Clovis, his rage was kindled by jealousy; and dreading the possibility of their being able to revenge their injuries, and, by a recovery of their liberty, regain their power, he ordered them both to be shaved; and this is the first instance, in which this ceremony was meant to operate as a disqualification, in persons thus treated, to ascend the throne. Not contented, however, with this mark of degradation, and suspicious of the consequences that might ensue, the assassin was again employed, and without compunction closed, by blood, the horrid scene. The two Princes being thus disposed of, he had sufficient influence or power to get himself acknowledged the sovereign of their dominions.

Ragnacharius, the king of Cambray, was now the only prince amongst the various nations of the Franks, of whom he entertained either dread or jealousy; he determined therefore to remove this impediment to his ambition: and having tampered with his subjects, he invaded with a numerous army his peaceful dominions.

Ragnacharius was neither idle nor intimidated; he collected, in haste, such troops as he could assemble, to oppose the lawless attempts of his ambitious rival. He sent out parties to explore the numbers, and to ascertain the forces of his opponent: but these were seduced from their fidelity

fidelity by the arts of Clovis; for they were in- A. D.  
structed to say, that the armies which appeared   
were not his enemies, but his own people who  
were coming to receive his commands. The  
Prince was deceived; and before he had time to  
assemble his numbers, he was attacked, defeated,  
and put to flight. The unhappy fugitive, in en-  
deavouring to make his escape, was taken, with his  
brother Richarius, by the treachery of their fol-  
lowers, and were delivered up, with their hands  
tied behind them, to the mercy of the tyrant.  
He upbraided them for appearing before him in  
the condition of common malefactors; and as he  
intimated the race from which they sprang, he  
observed that a thousand lives could not wear out  
the disgraceful stain. He had scarcely uttered  
these opprobrious words, when, with his battle-  
axe, he cleft the head of Ragnacharius; and then  
turning to Richarius, he upbraided him for his  
cowardice in not attempting to defend his rela-  
tion, and in the same breath, and with the same  
instrument, he struck him to the ground.

This tragedy was only in want of one more  
victim, to make the catastrophe complete. Reg-  
nomer, another brother of the unfortunate suf-  
ferers, and who was the king of those Franks  
who were settled at Mans, was likewise doomed  
to swell the list of his enormities, and his posses-  
sions to reward the crimes of this flagitious con-  
queror.

A. D. And yet these accumulated acts of atrocity committed without provocation, and almost without any motives of necessity, were glanced over by the clergy, and atoned for by his benevolence to the church, and by the foundation of chapels and monasteries.

In the last year of his reign, he began to digest, to reform, and to republish, the Salic laws: and the promulgation of this system of inheritance, which has continued for so many ages, and which still operates with full force, in the kingdom of France, was soon afterwards succeeded by the demise of him who made it public; for the legislator died in the forty-fifth year of his life, and in the thirtieth year of his reign; but the tyrant will live until time itself shall wear away, and only then cease to record his vices. Clovis departed this life at Paris, and was buried in the church of the holy Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, which was erected by Cholidis, who retired after the death of her husband into Touraine, and there passed the remainder of her days at the tomb of St. Martin.

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In delineating this character, much reflection will be required, and much impartiality ought to be observed. The foundation of a great empire forms an æra in the history of man: to enlarge by gradual conquests, or to acquire by sudden victories,

victories, cannot fail to mark the hand of the conqueror; but to cement by political prudence, and to keep unshaken an edifice once raised, requires a spirit of action, and an energy of thought, which few monarchs have ever possessed. A. D.

In reviewing therefore this celebrated life, we shall find much, in the pages that pourtray it, to surprise the eye, and much to disgust the heart. We shall see what exploits have been achieved by courage and conduct, and what barbarities have been the consequences of jealousy and ambition: we should therefore detach the hero from the man, and make a just estimate of his virtues, and his vices.

We do not find in the French historians much display of those mechanical passions to which human nature is subject; nor are we any where presented with the convivial manners of the private character of Clovis. In his palace we hardly hear of his name, to regulate its amusements, or to conduct its urbanity; we must follow him therefore to the camp, the scene of his politics, and to the field, the theatre of his glory.

He was gifted by nature with talents to form a hero; and by art he acquired such a command of reason, as to make it not the tyrant, nor the slave of his passions. His constitution was strong and hardy; and his hand was always ready to second with effect the plans he had formed, and to conduct them to a rapid and a prosperous issue.

As



A. D. As he knew how to command himself, it became an easy matter for him to teach obedience to others; and although we do not hear much of his favours, and of his largeſſes beſtowed upon his ſoldiers, yet we do not read of treachery and deſertion. Valiant in himſelf, but prudent in his courage, he knew how to excite intrepidity without raiſe-  
neſs, and to acquire conqueſt, although his foot-  
ſteps were marked with ſlaughter.

If we reflect upon the variety and extent of his enterpriſes, we muſt wonder at his reſources, and extol the foreſight that ſupplied them; for in operations of magnitude there is more diſplay of talents required in the prevention of difficulties, than there is of courage in the contempt of danger.

That he could keep together ſo large an army by his authority, that he could inſpire them with his ambition, and lead them to glory by his example, are facts that we cannot diſpute; but that he ſhould render the conquered provinces ſubſervient to his power, attached to his perſon, and obedient to his diſcipline, are convincing proofs of the moderation of his command, and the ſuperiority of his character; for where there is confidence, there will not be defection.

As Clovis was the firſt founder of a great Monarchy, he muſt ever ſtand a prominent feature in the page of reflection; and being an active figure, and not merely an automaton, he will naturally

turally arrest the eye, and fix the attention. The A. D. surrounding accompaniments must likewise give an interest to the representation, as without auxiliaries and dependencies the hero cannot be perfect.

To create, to cement, and to leave unshaken the empire that he had formed, was an instance of good fortune almost peculiar to himself; and if armies well provided require a superior degree of thought and foresight—if the sovereign be the brilliant centre of his own system—if he vivify, without consuming, the myriads that move around him—if, in short, he be a monarch, who with judgment wills, and whom his subjects with alacrity obey—if such talents, and such confidence, combine, what can shake an union thus cemented?

If to fly from victory to victory, and to conquer superior armies without the wanton effusion of his subjects blood, bespeak the General, where will this name apply with more real energy than it will to Clovis? If conduct lead to courage, and courage be the harbinger of conquest, to whom can this axiom be more gloriously applied than it will be to Clovis? But if public prosperity shall be contaminated by private treachery, ambition pave the way to domestic enormities, and jealousy stimulate to kindred murder, who will not shudder to think that such crimes are to be attributed to Clovis?


The

A. D. The French historians, although partial to his weaknesſes, are yet ſufficiently juſt to acknowledge his vices. That he was enterpriſing without principle, and cruel without repentance, we are led from facts to believe; but that the Clergy abſolved his crimes in conſideration of his generoſity to communities, and his ſpiritual foundation of churches and monaſteries, is what a reſpect to the order will encourage us to doubt. The miniſters of peace can never be the friends of warfare, nor conſider him great, who has acquired this title by treachery and rapine.

That he was faithful to his wife Clotildis, if a fact, was certainly a merit in an age of demi-barbariſm, and among a people who were habituated to the allurements of plunder; but then the common vices of his nature were in other reſpects ſo very atrocious, that the merit of his chaſtity appears to be obſcured by the multiplicity of his crimes.

The life, the reign, and the death of Clovis, exhibit a very large, but not a pleaſing field of ſpeculation. They are highly intereſting to the nation which he founded, as from him the French Monarchy derived their firſt ſparks of conſequence, and from his example and conſtitutions, the rays that brightened up their future glory.

The converſion of the Gallic Monarch having had a conſiderable influence upon his life and reign, will naturally excite reflections in the mind,  
but

but not such as might be expected from one who A. D.  
had renounced what he thought a defective reli-   
gion, for the spiritual tenets of another which he  
considered perfect.

We are apprehensive that conversion is more frequently made a cloak to hide the interested pursuits of life, than a real proof of sincerity of heart; and that it more often proceeds from advantages that are to be expected, than from a conviction of errors that are to be eschewed. We do not find that the morals of Clovis were improved by his renunciation of Paganism, or that the pathetic trials of meekness and forgiveness so tenderly recorded in the history of our Saviour, had subdued his resentments, or helped to soften the natural barbarity of his heart. We should be apt to doubt his reverence for the Christian faith, and to discredit the moral changes that this persuasion might have wrought in his sentiments and actions, when we review his conduct, towards the Merovingean Princes, particularly towards Chararic, who was the immediate cause of his victory upon the plains of Tolbiac, whom he cut off without injuries to aggravate resentment, without opposition to sanction policy, and without personal hatred or domestic fear. If it only related to government, it was an unjustifiable as a cruel atrocity; if from the effervescence of religious zeal, and to shew himself a warm and an active proselyte, he seems to have taken up a religion,  
but

A. D. but to have overlooked its tenets, and to have run directly counter to the doctrine it inculcates.

His wish to extirpate Arianism by the sword, and to annex the dominions of those unfortunate people who were educated in that persuasion, favours more of the political tyrant, than of the honest man. That he was a great king, according to the perverted acceptation of the word, his heroic deeds will sufficiently evince; and that his ambition was confirmed by success, his empire, as situated at his death, will be an ample witness:—but that he was a good and a just sovereign, and from principle, abstracted from interest, was the father of his people, we have reason to doubt; for it is not to be supposed that records so advantageous to his private character would be passed over without a comment, when his public life has been so much the pride and labour of the historian.

His invasion of the territories of the Burgundians exhibit this aspiring man in a different point of view, and had some shew of reason, as the father of his wife Clotildis had been murdered by the command of Gondebald: but his thirst of power too often excited him to the conquest of other kingdoms; and although an unprincipled aggressor, he succeeded either by good fortune or good conduct in the completion of his most adventurous enterprises.

In



In the battle that he gained between Lan- A. D. gres and Dijon, he was much indebted to the treachery of Godegifiles, and much to his own courage and example, and to the irresistible bravery of his troops; and it may be generally allowed that he not often sustained a great slaughter of his own people, in the different actions in which he came off victorious.

His seizure of the kingdom of the Visigoths was another proof of his lawless outrage upon the rights of others; but this conquest might not have been so easily achieved, had not the tender years of Alaric left open to him the field of enterprise, and the prospect of glory.

Theodoric, the king of the Ostrogoths, may be considered as his most formidable rival; and his defeat at the siege of Arles in Provence, and the subsequent victory gained over him by Hibba, to be the only military failures that he experienced, during a long and a prosperous reign.

To sum up the moral and the military life of Clovis, it may be only necessary to say, that he was the aggressor in almost all his invasions, and that he stained with cruelty what he had acquired by injustice. The conquests he made, he retained; and his subjects were attached to his person, and submissive to his government. His reign was a rapid course of prosperity, and his life was a scene of constant action, uninterrupted by treachery or rebellion, and unmarked by any public or private calamity.

A. D. calamity. As a hero, he claims our regard; but as a man, our execration.

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The Franks, before their irruption into Gaul, were divided into clans, or tribes, which were independently governed by different princes, and which had their peculiar code of laws, their national manners, and local distinctions. Clovis reigned over those which were called the Salians, and from whom those laws, so strictly interwoven into the texture of the government, and the legal inheritance of their kings, were first derived. They obtained their appellation from the river Sale, of which there are three in France of the same name: the first falls into the Meuse, the second into the Elbe; but that which now takes the name of the Iffel, is supposed to be the real one, upon the borders of which these nations dwelt.

It is pretended on one hand that the Salic law was made by Philip the Long, in the year 1316, as an expedient by which the daughters of Lewis Hutin might be excluded from the inheritance of the crown; it is contended by others, that Pharamond was the first by whom it was enacted: but it appears by decided authority, that, if Clovis was not the real author of it, he revised at least, and left it to posterity in its present state.

The

The whole of the Salic laws, we mean to say, <sup>A. D.</sup> were collected by Clovis. The particular clause above related, by which the female is excluded from inheritance, has ever been the same: it intimates expressly, "that no part of the Salic lands shall be inherited by women; for, as they had been originally acquired by males, they alone shall possess what their vigour and courage had achieved." From hence the idea has been taken that women are incapacitated to succeed to the crown of France. But the Salic laws, properly speaking, were the entire code of the Salians. Every distinct tribe of the Franks had its local laws, which, although nearly alike, differed in some particular instances; as did those of the Alemanni and Bavarians, who were permitted, when subjugated by Clovis, to retain their own peculiar institutions and domestic customs. These laws were drawn up in the Latin tongue; which plainly proves that they were not collected, and committed to writing, until the Franks had relinquished their original seats. They contain a great variety of articles; are very minute, and simple; and are well calculated to preserve order and domestic peace. Childibert and Clotaire revised them after Clovis; but Dagobert published them in their most perfect state.

The Ripuarian Franks were seated upon the banks of the Rhine, the Moselle, and the Roer,

A. D. which runs through Westphalia; and hence, from *ripa*, or a bank, they acquired the name of Ripuarii. Having joined themselves, under Clovis, to the Salians, they were permitted to retain their own customs; and Theodoric, the king of Austrasia, ordered them to be reduced into writing. Their laws were compiled, revised, and corrected by Dagobert; and, in many instances, differed from those of the Salians; and, in some parts, the latter are cleared up by the former. What relates to the allodial lands is conformable to both nations.

Of the general habits and local customs of these people before they left Germany, very little information can be with certainty gathered from any but the Roman writers. They very much resembled the ancient Gauls, in their morals and mode of worship. They were more simple than their neighbours, more warlike, although not so much given to industry. They were in a state of the most rude society, subsisting entirely by the products of the chase, upon milk, cheese, fruits, and the pasturage of their cattle, of which almost all of the German tribes had considerable herds. Their civil government was extremely limited: in times of peace they had not any fixed magistrate; but the chief men of every district dispensed justice by their personal authority, and accommodated differences by the influence

influence of their own mediations. Disputes of A. D. consequence were left to be determined by the community at large.

When they thought proper to appoint magistrates, they had not any power either to imprison, or to inflict a corporal punishment upon a freeman; therefore every person was, in some measure, obliged to revenge his own wrongs: but, although their enmities were hereditary, they were not lasting; and a fine of cattle, was a compensation even for murder; a part of which devolved to the king or state, and the other portion to the person injured. Not but many tribes differed as they were near to, or further removed from, the Roman provinces. They had not any cities; and so far did they carry their spirit of independency, that in their villages they would not have their cottages contiguous; as they observed, that the most ferocious animals of the desert, insensibly lose their fierceness when confined. Too indolent, or too warlike, to turn their hands to agriculture, they left their rural economy entirely to their women and serfs, or bondsmen, the former of whom they held in so much respect, that their advice was frequently demanded in affairs of national importance; and those who required hostages of an enemy, were better pleased to have females of consequence than males.

Their young people, modest and reserved, were not contracted in marriage until they had attained




A. D. their twentieth year; and were almost the only Barbarians who were contented with one wife, notwithstanding the Merovingian Kings, either from policy or a disdain of controul, had commonly two or three. Some countries allowed not of a second matrimonial contract; giving, as a reason, that one body should have but one soul. The women did not carry any marriage portion; but the husband was obliged to settle one upon his wife, which was corresponding to the rank of the donor. Adultery entailed infamy; and the dishonoured had a right to punish the infidelities of the delinquents. A want of innocence was followed by a want of protection; for she who had lost her virtue, found not pity, but disgrace. The objects of corruption were banished from their societies; and character was not sold, as there was neither temptation nor necessity to induce the purchase. Voluptuous entertainments, that unnerve the body, and inflame the mind; seductive music, that speaks to the passions, without finding a way to the heart; and effeminate poetry, that chimes upon the ear, while it insults the judgment; glittering gems, unmeaning state, and all its train of luxury and expence; were driven from the gloomy forests of the Barbarians, to take up their residence in polished and enlightened kingdoms.

From marriage, the simple contract of which was chastity, there arose an athletic and healthy race;

race; and the glory of the parent consisted in A. D. their number and their strength. So soon as they were born, they were plunged into the running stream; and were instructed, according to their rude ideas of education, with care and tenderness; and, contrary to the unnatural practice of modish life, the mothers took delight in that most amiable of all duties, in that of nursing those whom nature had confided to their bosom, to recompense the danger of having brought them forth. As their hopes were centered in their offspring, they did not wish that one look of tenderness should be wasted upon a foster-mother, which they had a right to claim; and as the attention of the child was not alienated by neglect or absence, their affection increased with their years, and their duty was their pride. In their progress to manhood, they were accustomed to exercises of danger, and the preparations of war, and were soon taught the use and consequence of arms. Their military accoutrements were not more sumptuous than their apparel. Their horses were neither beautiful, nor swift; and riding was not considered as an amusement, but a necessity:—they had neither saddle nor stirrups, but used the bridle with strength and dexterity.

Their funerals were observed without pomp or ceremony. The life of a good man is a sufficient memorial; and that of a bad one cannot be too soon forgotten. An eschutcheon is often the re-


A. D. membrancer of folly, and the record of guilt. The  bodies of the nobility were burnt; the lower orders of the people were interred, and a verdant turf supplied their epitaph.

In their religion, they neither erected temples to their gods, nor represented them under the degrading figures of humanity: the Majesty of Heaven cannot be confined within walls, nor its immortal essence be typified by the representation of matter. The Romans, at last, taught them idolatry; and this species of worship estranged them, in some measure, from nature. In the gloomy magnificence of their forests, and in the silent solemnity of their shades, their ideas were impressed with religious horror; and the enthusiasm of their minds depicted upon their fancy the presence of a god, whom they imagined was to be only appeased by the sacrifice of human blood. Their places of worship were sacred; and if any person entered into those mysterious abodes, they allowed themselves to be bound, acknowledging thus their entire submission to the Deity. Their priests, invested with a tunic of the finest stuff, assembled the people at the full moon; a period which they deemed the most auspicious. Given to augury, they preferred those omens which were derived from the inspection of white horses, carefully pastured in their forests, and never profaned by labour, nor the chase: harnessed to the sacred car, their neighing, their manner

manner of drawing, and the route they preferred, A. D. were the tokens by which their predictions were understood; and they never engaged in battle, without having first consulted their auspices.

The power of their chiefs or kings rather consisted in the privilege of advising, than in the right of enforcing command; and the contributions of their subjects, made either in grain or in cattle, were voluntary, as was their military service. To their general assemblies they repaired singly, and always armed: such as approved of an expedition, made known their assent by standing up; but infamous was the man who afterwards abandoned his chief. There was no precedence except in the priesthood. Every one was heard according to his age, his martial exploits, and his acknowledged eloquence. Their harangues were persuasive, not commanding: the shock of arms was a signal of approbation; and a fullen murmur, that of dissent.

The use of letters, or the mediation of sense through the impression of characters, was totally unknown amongst this people; hence no annals were preserved of the past: but verses, such as in other rude states had been treasured up by memory, were the only records of former deeds. Sons succeeded their fathers without testamentary confirmation; and males succeeded males, according to the degrees of proximity. It may be naturally supposed, that commerce, among a people

A. D. so simple, had not attained to any consequence.  Those who resided near the sea had small vessels, made with leather sewed together, or with oziers covered with the same materials, with which they were used to navigate that tempestuous element. In conversation they were rather taciturn than talkative, yet vain, arrogant, and quarrellsome; idle in all things, to a proverb, excepting in war; this was their common exercise, and in this was placed their first delight. Strange contradiction of indolence and of activity!


When drawn up in the field of battle, their most common arrangement was a selection from the whole army, of two or three companies, each consisting of a hundred young men, who were placed in the front of the battalions, to encounter the first shock of danger; and in the rear were disposed their waggons and their baggage. The women kept as near as possible to their husbands, inspired their valour, and encouraged their perseverance. In time of action they carried them refreshment, reproached the fugitives, and drove them back to the charge, by their exhortations or remonstrances, and oftentimes shared the dangers of the combat.

Animated by the sound of the trumpet, they encouraged each other to noble daring, by reciting the praises of their heroes, or the martial deeds of their ancient worthies. By the clashing of their arms, and the confused thunder of their helmets,



helmets, they prepared themselves for the conflict A. D.  
of arms. The attack was begun with impetuosity  
and vigour ; and they sometimes gave way, to  
return with additional fury to the charge. The  
loss of a shield was the loss of honour. Cut off  
from society, the unfortunate person could no  
longer assist at sacrifices, nor join in the assemblies  
of the people ; and so seriously were they affected  
by it, that death was preferable to the disgrace.

Courage, and an enthusiastic love of liberty, appeared to be a native instinct in the breast of the Franks. They were simple in their manners, sincere in their attachments, hospitable to example, but drunkards to a fault. Although mild towards the humble, and compassionate to the supplications of the unfortunate ; to their enemies they were cruel, vindictive, and implacable ; just and faithful to each other ; yet treachery marks their character abroad. Their right was the law of arms ; and possession was their only title to their usurpations. They conquered countries, not to fertilize the soil, but to make it barren. Surrounded by deserts and solitude, they rather chose to live in want themselves, than that their enemies should be tempted to invade their territories, on account of the cultivation of their fields. No people were ever known to defend themselves better against the overwhelming ambition of the Romans. In their humble settlements, and in the depths of their forests, they vindicated

A. D. vindicated the rights of man, and sharpened  their spears in defence of that freedom to which they were born ; and which, for the space of five hundred years, amidst conquest and defeat, they in some measure preserved in its native vigour. Determined to be free, luxury, with all its train of dangerous voluptuousness, unmeaning flattery, and insolent deceit, could not penetrate their breasts. How mortifying is it then to human pride, to forsake the marble palace and the flowery shade, to behold virtue undisguised in the gloomy wood, and in the chill morass !

They had neither honours nor personal distinctions,—those names that take up sound, to leave out sense : equal in situation and in duty, their origin being common to all, inspired them with humility ; and envy was a term not known in application, nor felt in its consequences. Courage supplied the place of nobility ; and virtue was, in their eyes, more valuable than crowns. If they were not assiduous in cultivating the land, they were not tempted to look below the surface for that which is the source of indolence, rapacity, and murder : despising therefore the medium by which other nations had been brought into slavery, they knew how to value and preserve their independency.

Such were the Franks in their original state, as described by those who were well acquainted with their manners, their customs, and their country ;

try ; and it is melancholy to think, that in all those regions which they once inhabited, not a single trace of those ancient virtues is now to be found. Their gloomy and impenetrable forests may be divided into fields that glow with cultivation ; the landscape may indeed smile, but the peasant is oppressed ; and while luxury and wealth know no bounds to their enjoyments, the hand of labour that supplies their delicious superfluity, may yet wither for want ; and such is the difference that rank has made between the unenjoyed abundance of the rich, and the pinching misery of the poor !

A. D.



A. D.

## CHAPTER III.

FROM THE DEATH OF CLOVIS TO THE DEATH  
OF CLOTAIRE.

Childebert, Clodomir, Clotaire, and Thierry, inherit the dominions of Clovis—The Danes repulsed by the Franks—War in Burgundy against Sigismund and Godemar—Sigismund taken and put to death by Clodomir—Death of Clodomir—Conquest of Thuringia—Amalaric defeated by Childebert—Reduction of Autun and Vienne—Theodobalde and Gunthaire assassinated by Clotaire—Escape of Clodoalde to a monastery—Expedition against the Visigoths—Conquest of Burgundy—Death of Thierry—Succeeded by Theodobert—Duplicity of the Franks to the Romans and Ostrogoths—Italy ravaged by Theodobert—His death—Theodobalde succeeds his father—Death of Theodobalde—Clotaire acknowledged king of Austrasia—Revolt of the Saxons—Death of Childebert—Clotaire sole monarch—Rebellion of Chramnes—Death and character of Clotaire.

511. **I**N that period which comprises an interval between the death of Clovis, and the commencement of the reign of Pepin, we shall meet with but little to satisfy curiosity, or to gratify political thinking. The constant enumeration of discord and treason, of power wrested from the weak, and treachery and assassination made subservient to the vices of the strong, are almost the only events that will be found in this disgusting part of the French history; but as it will be necessary, for the better knowledge of what may ensue, that we should proceed along the strait road  
of

of inquiry, we shall therefore traverse the difficulties of the paths before us, and, without fatiguing the reader with the horrors of the journey, endeavour to clear his way for the observation of more tranquil scenes, and the enjoyment of more cloudless prospects. A. D.

The four sons of Clovis inherited his extensive dominions, which were divided amongst them in the following manner:—To Clodomir was assigned the kingdom of Orleans; to Childbert, that of Paris; and to Clotaire, that of Soissons. These three were the sons of Clotildis. Thierry, or Theodoric, was a natural son of Clovis, and was born prior to his marriage with Clotildis. To him was bequeathed the most considerable share of his father's possessions. He was nominated king of Austrasia, or of Eastern France, in the life-time of Clovis; a country situated between the Rhine and the Meuse, and the capital of which was Metz in Lorraine. He possessed likewise, under the same bequest, many other fruitful provinces in France, as also all those territories that belonged to the Franks in Germany, which were situated on the eastern side of the Rhine. In the reign of these princes, the appellation of Gaul was changed for that of France.

After the death of Clovis, the various dominions of the Franks were preserved in tranquillity, during the space of seven years, by the prudent administration of Clotildis; when Chochiliac,



A. D. liac, the king of Denmark, arrived with a numerous fleet at the mouth of the Meuse; and having disembarked his defultory and rapacious troops, laid waste the country with fire and with sword; and an action having taken place, in which Theobert the son of Thierry discovered very signal instances of conduct and valour, the enemy were defeated on shore; and the naval force which had been provided at sea, was equally triumphant upon that element. The King of the Danes was killed; the prisoners which had been captured  
518. were surrendered; and the discomfited army was obliged to retire with precipitation and dismay.


Upon the death of Gondebald, the king of the Burgundians, who had murdered Chilperic, the father of Clotildis, his sons, Sigismund and Gode-mar, had succeeded to his dominions. The widow of Clovis entertained a deep resentment against the family of the assassin, and instigated her sons, who had now attained the age of manhood, to avenge his death upon the heirs of the late king.

Sigismund had early in life polluted his hands with the blood of a son, whom he had by a daughter of Theodoric the Great: this circumstance, although at a period of history when murders were frequent, had so considerably weakened the affections of his subjects, that he was not in a situation either to oppose the armies, or contend with the discipline of the troops of the sons of Clovis. The contest was unequal: his forces were  
defeated,

defeated, and he was taken and delivered up, with A. D. his queen and his two sons; into the hands of Clodomir; who, as if the human mind, in the pursuit of novelty, was delighted to find a variety in punishment, ordered them to be buried alive in a deep well; and they thus underwent the same torture that Chilperic had received from his brother Gondebald. Godemar for a while endeavoured to maintain the war; but, in a second battle that took place, his forces were entirely routed by the superior fortune of Clodomir: the victory was, however, by those unexpected events which a man 524. can neither foresee nor evitate, of fatal consequence to the temporary victor, who having been imprudently eager in the pursuit of his enemies, was surrounded and slain.

Hermanfroy, the king of Thuringia, having 531. excited the resentment of the sovereign of Metz, the latter intreated, and obtained the assistance of Clotaire. The two princes poured at once into his dominions with a numerous force: in a decisive engagement, Hermanfroy was defeated; and being soon after slain by the treachery of Thierry, his extensive dominions were annexed to the kingdom of Austrasia.

While the brothers were thus engaged, Childibert was in arms against Amalaric, the king of the Visigoths. He had married Clotildis, and endeavoured to constrain her to renounce the Catholic, for the Arian faith. Ambition can, at all times,

 A. D. times, find an excuse to justify oppression; and it is much to be lamented that it should so often shelter itself under the cloak of religion. To revenge, therefore, the cause of his sister, he repaired, in haste, to Septimania, or that part of Gaul which was held by the Visigoths. While he was intent upon this enterprize, a report prevailed, that Thierry the king of Austrasia had been slain: upon this intelligence, he turned his arms to Auvergne, a part of his brother's dominions, and got possession of the capital; but the rumour being speedily contradicted, he prosecuted, with rage and disappointment, his first intention. Prosperity paved the way for usurpation: Amalaric was defeated; Narbonne fell into the hands of the victor, with a considerable booty; and the Gothic monarch himself became soon after a victim to domestic treachery. From this success he returned, laden with spoil, to the city of Paris; where, uniting his forces to those of Clotaire, they continued the Burgundian war, equally successful in that quarter. Autun was reduced, and Vienne surrendered, after having made a vigorous opposition to the power of their arms.

532.

Clotildis, the widow of Clovis, became now earnest in her supplication to Childebert to do justice to the sons of Clodomir. Moved apparently by the natural zeal of her importunities, he consulted the King of Soissons. These princes formed their treacherous plans, and desired that  
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the children might be committed to their care. A D. The expectation of seeing them seated upon the throne, consoled the queen for her temporary loss; but her confidence was exchanged for desperation, when Arcadius, who betrayed the city of Auvergne into the hands of Childebert, presented to her choice a pair of scissars or a sword. Astonished at a message of so much insolence and horror, her resentment overcame her caution, and she inadvertently replied, that she would rather behold them dead than see them monks. Upon receiving this determined answer, the inhuman Clotaire struck Theodobalde, who was then about ten years old, with a dagger to the heart. Gunthaire, who had attained little more than half that age, embraced, with innocent tears and moving pity, the knees of Childebert: affected by the timid supplications of the infant sufferer, he intreated his brother to spare him; but the brutal assassin indignantly exclaimed, "It was by thy instigation I entered upon this scene of blood; give, therefore, way to the vengeance of my arm, or thou shalt become a victim to its fury." He retired, and the remorseless villain levelled the stroke of death.

While this tragedy was acting, the attendants of this latter prince had conveyed away the person of Clotoalde; which so much excited the resentment of the King of Soissons, who, the more was shed, the more he thirsted for blood, that he immediately

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ordered



A. D. ordered the tutors and domestics of his unfortunate nephews to be put to death. The youth however escaped, and became a monk: the sanctity of his life and manners, has left his name to the celebrated village of St. Cloud, one of the most beautiful retreats in the vicinity of Paris.

Thierri, not concerned in the intention or perpetration of these enormities, was induced to overlook them, in consequence of a participation of the kingdoms of the deceased. He was reconciled to the executioner, that he might become an usurper; and, entering into an alliance with Clo-taire, formed a plan to deprive the Ostrogoths and the Visigoths of what they still possessed in Gaul.

We may now entertain some idea of these bloody annals; and may observe, how painful must be the task of recording atrocities so degrading to human nature, and which set the thirst of empire in so disgusting a point of view. If crowns be so often obtained by treachery and bloodshed, and he is dignified with the appellation of great, who is successful in villainy; what term shall be then applied to those kings, who, contented with a life of justice and humanity, wish not to extend their dominions by an infringement of the rights of others, satisfied with the triumph of reigning in the confidence and affection of their people?



In order to pave the way to the accomplishment of their ambitious designs, Gunthier, the son of Clotaire, and Theodobert, with the forces of his father Thierry, were sent into Septimania, to recover some cities which the Visigoths had regained in that province: but at the very commencement of the campaign, Gunthier retired with his army, and left Theodobert to sustain the war, without his alliance and support.

A. D.

534.

At the time of this intended enterprize, the conquest of Burgundy was achieved by the mutual powers of Clotaire and Childebert. That kingdom, at an end as an independent state, was yet suffered to retain its own particular government and laws; and the fate of its late sovereign, Godemar, has escaped the researches of the historian.

Not satisfied with this splendid acquisition, the death of Thierry afforded an extensive range to their aspiring views: they had flattered themselves, that, by intrigues and promises, they should have been able to supplant the natural claims of Theodobert; but aware of their sinister designs, this prince, upon his father's death, repaired with celerity to Metz, and was immediately proclaimed the king of Austrasia. Disappointed in their expectations, and dreading his power, they not only solicited his alliance, but invited him to a share in the division of Burgundy.

In Italy the French Princes beheld a new field opened to their treachery. They entered into an

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alliance

A. D. alliance with Justinian, who was endeavouring to drive the Ostrogoths out of that country, and at 539. the same time began a negociation with Theodad, their king. Their duplicity was attended with unmerited success; for, from the latter they obtained Provence, and the country of the Grifons, besides very considerable subsidies from the Emperor; who also, upon his success in Italy, soon after confirmed the donation of Theodad, thereby renouncing all farther claim to any dominion in France. Theodobert, to increase his perfidy, under the idea of giving assistance to Belisarius, the Imperial general, passed the Alps, and attacked both the Gothic, and the Roman forces. Having plundered the country as far as Genoa, he repassed the mountains with an enormous booty; but, to counteract his successes, he lost an incredible number of his troops by sickness and fatigue.

Accustomed to perpetual discord, the Franks were not calculated to taste the sweets of peace. Clotaire made an irruption into the territories of Childebert: this prince being supported by Theodobert, surprised the former in a forest, upon the banks of the Seine. A terrible storm of lightning, thunder, and rain, having supervened, Childebert, intimidated by this dreadful convulsion of the elements, concluded a peace of alliance and friendship with his brother.

No sooner were the terms adjusted, than, without any provocation, they turned their arms against  
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the Visigoths ; and passing the sublime heights of <sup>A. D.</sup> the Pyrenean mountains, ravaged the countries of <sup>543.</sup> Pampelona and Arragon, and penetrated as far as Sarragossa : oppressed by the overwhelming incumbrance of the spoil they had obtained, and harassed by the enemies in their retreat, they would have been intercepted and cut to pieces, had it not been for the treachery of a Gothic officer, who, having been bribed, left open a safe path in the mountains for their retreat. While the brothers were thus employed, Theodobert was negotiating with Justinian, and with Tottila, who had in some measure restored the affairs of the Ostrogoths. By deceiving both, he flattered himself that he might probably become the sovereign of Italy. In the midst of his formidable <sup>548.</sup> preparations, the hand of death arrested his projects, and put an end to his enterprises and his life. Theodobalde succeeded his father, and died, after a short and inglorious reign, at Compiègne. Upon that event, Clotaire repaired to Metz, and, by means of a powerful army, had sufficient influence to get himself declared the successor of the late king.

555.

The Saxons, who had been the tributaries of the Austrasian Monarch, permitted him not long to enjoy his newly-acquired dominions in peace ; for, uniting with the Thuringians, they endeavoured to recover their independency. Clotaire, with his veteran troops, marched against them in

A. D. person, and obtained a decisive victory : they submitted, and again revolted ; a second time he received their submissions ; but the army, dissatisfied with his lenity, obliged him to attack them in their intrenchments, when they made so desperate a resistance, that the Franks not only retired, and granted them their own terms, but were averse to any future attempts, under his reign, upon those liberties which they knew so well how to defend.

558. Chilbert, the king of Paris, jealous of the growing power of his brother, encouraged the Saxons to a third revolt, and entering himself into Champagne, made dreadful ravages in that country ; but in the midst of the desolation which he had occasioned, he was overtaken by sickness, and expired in the capital of his dominions.

As this prince was neither respected for his abilities, nor beloved for his virtues, his name has rather filled than graced the historic page : he has been commended as a lover of clemency, of piety, and justice ; qualities indeed highly splendid in a descendant of Clovis, had he in reality possessed them : but how much are they debased by his ambition, treachery, and deceit !

He had two daughters, who were first imprisoned, and afterwards banished by Clotaire ; and this is the first instance of the operation of the Salic law, by which, as heiresses to their father, they



they were set aside from the possession of his A. D. crown.

By the death of his brother, Clotaire became the sole monarch of the various dominions of the Franks. His son Chramnes, who had rebelled against him, now found himself unable to contend with the superiority of his arms: he had, therefore, recourse, not to the tenderness, but the instinct of his breast; and although suspicious of his clemency, he besought and obtained his pardon. Inflamed by the same ambition that actuated the bosom of his father, he could ill conceal the impatience with which he looked forward to the hour of command; and, forming new intrigues, he engaged the assistance of Conobert, the Count of Bretagne. The confederates entered the dominions of Clotaire, and ravaged the country with fire and with sword: incensed at their cruel devastation, the King of the Franks drove them back into Brittany with a dreadful slaughter; and in a subsequent engagement routed their forces, and gave them a total overthrow. The Count himself was slain, and Chramnes, with his wife and children, made prisoners. The inexorable father, forgetting the ties of consanguinity in his resentment, immediately ordered them to be thrown into a thatched house, that was contiguous to the field of battle; and as it was 560. purposely set on fire, the miserable inhabitants were consumed by its flames.



A. D. Conscience, that dearly repays by internal remorse the atrocities of external action, embittered his days, and made him look in vain for an atonement of his crimes at the shrine of St. Martin of Tours. Compunction entered into his prayers, and made abortive his oblations. He lost, never to be recovered, his peace of mind, and endeavoured to divert the despondency of thought, by political regulations, and domestic arrangements. The wound that had been given to his feelings, by the death of Chramnes, proved mortal in the end; for, after having languished out a wretched existence for the space of twelve months after that inhuman catastrophe, he was overtaken by sickness at Compiègne; and, after a reign of fifty-one years, was hurried, without a sufficient time for repentance, to the gloomy confines of the grave. Is it to be wondered at, when casting back a last, and a melancholy look, upon the enormities of his life, he should exclaim, at the moment of death: "How puissant art thou, O King of Heaven! who in thy pleasure canst remove the most mighty kings upon earth!"

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In a reign so long and prosperous as that of Clotaire, it is natural to suppose that good fortune or great abilities conspired to make it eminent. It would be unjust to imagine that he derived his vices from the blood of Clotildis, when

when his father's example was so atrocious. He <sup>A. D.</sup> was resentful, without justice ; he waged war, to become an usurper ; and he was an assassin, because he delighted to destroy. His treachery and cruelty were prominent features of his character ; and the outrage committed upon the persons of his nephews, was such as cannot be reflected upon without disgust, nor recited without horror.

The brutal destruction of his own family closed, as it ought, his power of vengeance, and gave him up to sorrow and remorse ; and if ever the inquisitive eye shall turn over the page of Clovis, let it follow the channel of blood, and it will shut it with disgust upon the sanguinary annals of Clotaire.

A. D.

## CHAPTER IV.

## FROM THE DEATH OF CLOTAIRE TO THE ASSASSINATION OF SIGEBERT.

Caribert, Gontran, Sigebert, and Chilperic, succeed to the dominions of Clotaire—The Huns invade Thuringia—defeated by Sigebert—He marries Brunehaut—Death of Caribert—his territory shared among his brothers—Chilperic marries Galswintha—she is strangled—Marries Fredegonde—The Huns and Lombards invade France—treaty concluded with the former—the latter defeated by Mammol—Gontran and Sigebert wage war against each other—Peace concluded—war again breaks out—Theodobert slain—Sigebert enters Paris—besieges Chilperic in Tournay—assassinated—Character.

UPON the demise of Clotaire, his dominions would have devolved, according to the custom of the Franks, upon his four sons; but Chilperic, the youngest, being of an enterprising and turbulent mind, immediately seized, and distributed, with a liberal hand, the treasures of the late king; by which means he gained a considerable party, was conducted in triumph to Paris, and was there seated upon the throne. The forces of his brothers soon obliged him to forego his usurpation, and to consent to an equitable division of their father's inheritance. Caribert, the eldest son, became the sovereign of the kingdom of Paris; to Gontram fell the dominions of Orleans; to Sigebert was assigned that of Austrasia, and to Chilperic the small kingdom of Soissons.

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This disunion of royalty and power, inspired A. D. with hopes the tributary nations which were settled on the borders of Germanic France, and who looked forward with impatience for an opportunity to recover their former independency : but the first who took up arms were the Abares, a fierce and a valiant people, composed of the scattered remains of those Huns who had been colonised by Justinian upon the banks of the Danube. They penetrated into Thuringia, and readily obtained the assistance of the inhabitants of that country, who had long bent, with indignation, under the galling yoke of the Franks.

Sigebert, a gallant and an active prince, assembled, without loss of time, a powerful army ; and instead of waiting, with deliberate courage, for the desultory inroads of these daring invaders, he anticipated their march, and attacked them in the very province in which they began their depredations. His measures were taken with so much prudence, and conducted with so much intrepidity, that, young as he was in the art of war, their superior size, and ferocious appearance, were of little avail against the orderly and persevering discipline of his troops : he attacked the Barbarians with resolution and success : they were defeated, compelled to repass the Elbe, and sue for peace. Disdaining to license slaughter, he accepted their submission, and confirmed the humble propositions of the vanquished.

563.

While

A. D. While he was conducting himself with magnanimity, and acquiring glory in Thuringia, Chilperic had invaded his dominions, and had possessed himself of Rheims, and of some other considerable places in that vicinity: so soon therefore as his treaty with the Huns was accomplished, he repassed the Rhine, invested Soissons, the capital of Chilperic's dominions, and seized upon the person of his eldest son, Theodobert. He afterwards defeated the king himself in battle, and not only recovered all the places of which he had been dispossessed by his treachery, but likewise made himself master of the principal part of his dominions.

The two elder brothers interposed, and offered their mediation: and Sigebert gave another instance of his moderation and greatness of mind, in concluding a peace, in renouncing his conquests, and in restoring to Theodobert his liberty: he did more; he loaded him with presents, but at the same time exacted an oath, that he would not again bear arms against him: and thus, by the singular virtue of one man, was the empire of the Franks restored to tranquillity.

He now advised with his council upon the subject of his marriage; and, in consequence, negotiated an alliance with Brunehaut, the daughter of Athanagildus, the sovereign of the Visigoths. This princess having been yielded to his wishes,  
was



was ushered into France, with treasures corre- A. D. spondent to the wealth of her father, and such as were worthy of the consort of the King of the Franks. The beauty of her person, her affable and engaging manners, and her immediate renunciation of the errors of Arianism, rendered her the delight of the people, little aware of the miseries which her future conduct was to bring upon that kingdom.

Caribert having made a journey to Saintonge, a district which he obtained by partition, died at the castle of Blaize upon the Garonne, at the age of forty-nine years, and in the ninth of his reign. Some historians allow him the praise of moderation, piety, and justice. He was certainly a very dissolute prince, and equally sensual with almost all the descendants of Clovis; but his enmity towards the ecclesiastics, and his usurpation of their domains, excited the resentment of the order, and induced them to thunder the most dreadful anathemas against his name and character.

His dominions were divided between his surviving brothers, but in a manner most strange and unaccountable. It was mutually agreed upon, that the city of Paris should not be the independent possession of either, but should equally belong to all; and they required three of the most pious and distinguished prelates in France to denounce their spiritual menaces against him who should

A. D. should presume to enter into it without the knowledge and consent of the other parties.

The first dawnings of the reign of Chilperic were prognostic of injustice and cruelty; and the envy which he bore to Sigebert, his brother, was apparent in his life and actions. Jealous of the dignity of his character, and the splendor of his attainments, he considered how much he lost by the comparison in the public estimation, and vainly flattered himself, that he could elevate himself to his standard by an honourable and an advantageous alliance. He therefore demanded and obtained from the Spanish Court the Princess Galswintha, the eldest sister of Brunehaut; but previously to his nuptials, which he had some difficulty to negotiate, he found it necessary to part with his mistress Fredegonde, a woman who had long maintained an entire ascendancy over his mind. She was as crafty as she was vicious, as accommodating as she was proud; and could flatter or betray, as either could tend to the success of her politics, or to the accomplishment of her revenge.

His subjects had flattered themselves that the amiable manners, and the virtuous example of the queen, would have effected some salutary reformation in his general conduct; and that in future he might become more acceptable to his people, and more worthy of the station to which he had been raised. Besides the personal advantages

tages which she so eminently possessed, she had likewise brought with her an immense treasure from her native country. This had for a time arrested the respect, but could not command the affections of her husband. The power that Fredegonde had relinquished, she imperceptibly resumed; and appearing again at the court of Soissons, the unfortunate Galswintha became a victim to the treachery of a weak king, and to the ambition of a remorseless woman;—she was found strangled in her bed: and Chilperic, however he might affect to bewail her death, was yet suspected, from his immediate union with Fredegonde, to be the real instigator of the crime.

A. D.  
567.

The remonstrances and intreaties of Brunehaut induced Sigebert and the King of Burgundy to take up arms, to revenge her sister's fate; and the inhuman King of Soissons, as the price of his guilt, was obliged to deliver up the countries of the Bourde-  
lois, Limosin, Quercey, Bearne, and Bigorre, which he had bestowed upon his queen, as a nuptial dower. How much, even in a barbarous age, may the passions of the mind be softened by interest! how suddenly may it inflame the tempest, and again how suddenly restore the calm!

In the succeeding year, the treaty between Sigebert and the Huns was broken by this restless people: upon their irruption into the province of Thuringia, he collected his forces, and prepared

A. D. prepared himself to oppose their incursions; but the frightful aspect of these Barbarians made so terrible an impression upon the minds of his troops, that they fled with precipitation before the enemy; and being pressed together in a narrow pass, they were surrounded on every side by the extremities of danger. Without the possibility of extricating himself, the Austrasian Monarch had recourse to that policy which seldom fails to have effect in the most desperate contentions of life; he opened, through the engines of corruption, the road to safety; and having gained the good will of the King of the Abares by his manners and address, he entered with him into terms of amity and peace. Embarrassed in their retreat, the generous Sigebert not only suffered them to continue their route unmolested, but furnished them with cattle and other necessaries, with which they were unprovided.

While he was thus engaged with the Huns, the Lombards made an inroad into the dominions of the King of Burgundy. This nation, of Gothic extract, had been invited into Italy by Narses, the exarch of Ravenna; and a few years before had made an entire conquest of that country. In three succeeding incursions they were defeated, with a body of Saxons, their auxiliaries, by the armies of Gontran. Scarcely disencumbered of this enemy, he was attacked by Sigebert. The citizens of Arles opened their gates to his generals: but, upon the approach of the Burgundian army,



army, they repelled them with equal, or more facility. The King of Austrasia having failed in this enterprize, with the loss of his best troops, was constrained to enter into terms of accommodation with his brother, who restored to him Avignon, which Celsus had seized in his way to Arles. A. D. 568

This calm was but of short duration; for, the next year, Chilperic having prevailed upon Gontran to join him, fell upon Champagne, and desolated that country with fire and with sword. Theodobert, the son of Chilperic, unmindful of his former obligations to the King of Austrasia, entered with his army into the province of Poitou. Determined to punish the man whom promises could not bind, Sigebert assembled his troops from beyond the Rhine, penetrated without resistance as far as the borders of the Seine, and entered with triumph the city of Paris; at the same time directing Gontran-Boson, and Godegisles, to oppose Theodobert. This young prince, abandoned by the greater part of his army, and after having made a valiant defence, was defeated, surrounded, and slain. The death of his son, with the recent union of his brothers, was an additional subject of mortification and distress to the King of Soissons: he also found that his subjects, so far from feeling for his misfortunes, betrayed evident marks of satisfaction at the disappointment of his hopes. With scarcely a possibility of saving himself from destruction, he hastened



A. D. 575. tened with his family and treasures to Tournay, determined there to defend himself to the last extremity.

The success of Sigebert invited Brunehaut and her children to Paris, where, animated by her former resentments, she encouraged him to invest Chilperic in his last place of refuge.

It was in vain the Bishop of St. Germain's, and other prelates of high rank, endeavoured, by holy exhortations, and scriptural references, to dissuade him from prosecuting his intentions : the remonstrances of the church were less powerful than the vengeance of his queen.

In this desperate situation, the King of Soissons still found a resource in the active mind of Fredegonde. Unaccustomed to scan the justice of the cause, or to feel remorse for the atrocity of her crimes, two villains, whom she had hired for the murderous purpose, accosted Sigebert, under the pretence of accommodation ; but their errand bespoke the instructress, and his blood empurpled the daggers of the assailants. His guards, before they had time to retreat, cut the regicides to pieces ; a poor atonement for the loss of the most accomplished and the most amiable king, France had hitherto beheld, who thus fell, in the height of his prosperity, in the forty-fourth year of his age, and towards the close of the fourteenth of his reign.

It is with complacency and delight that we A. D. can discover in these barbarous times a clear page to record the virtues of Sigebert, to whom concurring historians allow the praise of a conqueror without cruelty, a king without tyranny, and a man without vices, or such as may be rather called defects which are common to our nature, and which are set as the intervening marks between a mortal and a superior station.

His first initiation of arms was prognostic of his future glory ; and the good qualities that began to open at the commencement of his life, were seen to expand in his progress through it. The moderation which he observed when successful, and the magnanimity he displayed to a vanquished enemy, incline us to think, that, had his life been spared until the reduction of Tournay, his conduct to Chilperic would have equalled his wonted forbearance.

The wisdom of his youth was scarcely surpassed by the experience of age, and his manners and deportment were so conformable to sense and reason, that they became the rule of right, and the imitation of his subjects. Generous, merciful, and good, he encouraged these propensities in others ; and as he made the contentment and the welfare of his people, the basis upon which he founded his happiness, they paid him, in advance, the willing homage of duty and obedience.

A. D. From the blood of Clovis he might have derived his courage, but from some other source must have sprung his moderation: his humanity was his own, and it proceeded from a heart whose sources of equity were not to be corrupted; but which, enriching as they flowed, gave more than they received. His character, an uncommon instance in those days, was untainted by the reproaches of usurpation, and his hands were unpolluted by the marks of blood. In short, he was a prince, whose virtues would have reflected honour upon a more enlightened age, and would have added lustre to the most brilliant annals.

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## CHAPTER V.

FROM THE DEATH OF SIGEBERT, TO THE DEATH  
OF DAGOBERT.

Childebert declared king of Austrasia—Brunehaut married to Meroveus—Both seized by Chilperic, who repels Godin—Meroveus and Clovis assassinated—Death and character of Chilperic—Gontran becomes the protector of Clotaire the Second—Conspiracy by Didier—Gondebaud—Death of Gontran—Succeeded by Childebert, who is defeated by Clotaire—The Varnes extirpated by Childebert—His death—Succeeded by Theodobert and Thierry—Defeat and death of Theodobert—Death of Thierry—Death of Brunehaut—Clotaire sole monarch


narch—Revolt of the Saxons—Death of Clotaire—Succeeded A. D.  
 by Dagobert—Sclavonians repulsed by the Austrasians—  
 Revolt of the Gascons—Death of Dagobert—His character. 575.

UPON the death of Sigebert, his armies immediately raised the siege of Tournay, and retired with expedition into the kingdom of Austrasia. Chilperic, at the instigation of Fredegonde, dispatched a body of troops, to seize upon the persons of his widow and children, and to possess themselves of the treasures deposited in Paris : but his principal and intended victim escaped his vigilance ; Childebert, the son of the late king, was saved by the fidelity of Gondebaud. He was conveyed away in safety to Metz, where he was received by the nobility, and joyfully acknowledged the king of Austrasia. As for Brunehaut, her daughters were taken from her, and she was confined to the city of Rouen.

This prosperous turn of affairs was not without alloy : Meroveus, his son, whom he had ordered to proceed to Poitou, and to possess himself of that province, instead of obeying his father's commands, repaired to Rouen, where, smitten by the still powerful charms of the widow of Sigebert, he obtained her willing concurrence, and prevailed upon the venerable Pretextatus, the bishop of the diocese, to join their hands, and to unite them in the state of wedlock.

A. D. Fredegonde, irritated, beyond her former vehemence, at this unexpected event, exerted her well-known influence over the king, and prevailed upon him to proceed immediately to Rouen. Aware of his danger, and unable to oppose the vengeance of Chilperic, Meroveus, with his bride, took refuge in the church of St. Martin: but betrayed by their fears, and deluded by promises, they delivered themselves into the hands of the king, who treated them for a time with kindness and affection, which they flattered themselves was a token of forgiveness, and a sanction of their espousals: but in the midst of this apparent reconciliation, he ordered his son to accompany him to Soissons, and Brunehaut to return with her children to Metz. 577. Unable to contend with his superior fortune, she nourished in secret the seeds of that enmity, which, bursting forth soon after, overwhelmed the dominions of France, for so many years, with slaughter and desolation. Every measure that could be dictated by open violence, or that could be designed by treachery and intrigue, were put in practice; and the sword and the dagger were daily drawn, and drenched in blood. In vain did the subject look for safety and tranquillity; the hours of confidence were interrupted by the assassin, and the innocent was not exempted from the guilty, in the stroke of death. The private distresses of individuals were overlooked, and



and public characters were marked out for re- A. D.  
venge. 

Godin, one of the generals of the Austrasians, was sent by Brunehaut to invest the city of Soissons, in which she knew Fredegonde then was. Chilperic, having collected a powerful army, compelled him to abandon the siege; but Gontran, espousing the cause of his nephew, sent a powerful force, commanded by Mummol, who defeated the army of the King of Soissons, with the loss of five-and-twenty thousand men. Enraged at this defeat, Chilperic ordered Meroveus to be shaved, and sent to the monastery of Aunisle. He found means to regain his liberty; and, after a variety of escapes and adventures, he was at length betrayed and put to death, by the command of Fredegonde. Clovis being now the only remaining son of Chilperic by his first wife, Audouera, and the only obstacle to the advancement of her own children to the throne, he was under a slight pretence imprisoned, and soon after fell a sacrifice to her insatiable ambition, at Noisy, upon the river Marne.

The intervening circumstances between this period, and the death of the King of Soissons, are too tedious to amuse, and too little interesting to bear recital: the narration of them would only mark the character of the times, and occasion horror and disgust. After three or four years of 584.

A. D. 589. civil discord between the brothers, Chilperic was assaulted one evening, upon his return from hunting, and fell under the strokes of assassins. Fredegonde was suspected to be the cause of his untimely end; but the silence of the early writers upon this subject, leads us to imagine, that among all her crimes, numerous as they were, this particular one remains to be proved.

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At the commencement of his reign, Chilperic gave strong marks of that enterprising and turbulent ambition which accompanied his progress through life, and which was only subdued by his death. If we contrast his character with that of Sigebert, he is lost in the comparison: the latter was open, valiant, and forgiving; the former, timid, sullen, and vindictive: the one was actuated only by the sentiments of honour and of virtue; the other, weak, and unprincipled, suffered himself to be governed by an ambitious and an artful woman, who was destitute of both.

He was called the Nero and the Herod of the times; appellations justly applied to his rapacious government, and the inhuman destruction of his family and children.

Affecting to be a legislator in civil, as well as a saint in spiritual affairs, he endeavoured to silence controversy by his eloquence, and to reconcile, by an edict of his own dictation, the disputes between

tween the Arians and those who defended the A. D. superiority of the Catholic faith.

He wrote prose, and he attempted poetry; but they were neither read, nor quoted: and if it be considered, that the literary talents of kings, however indifferent, are generally commended, it is natural to suppose, from their total neglect, that they merited their fate.

His life is too often glanced over by historians, without a sufficient display of his reign, and of his crimes. If there be not virtues to record, it is equally their duty to arraign those vices, that have had a tendency to degrade the dignity of human nature, and to sully the private character of the man.

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Upon the death of Chilperic, Fredegonde found herself, with her infant son Clotaire, in a situation that ill accorded with her imperious and haughty spirit. Deserted by those whom, as the ministers of her ambition, she had raised to favour, and insulted by those whom she had injured and oppressed, she had no resource but in the friendship and assistance of Gontran; she earnestly conjured him to be the protector of his nephew, and prevailed upon him, by her supplications, to repair to Paris.

According to the policy of the times, the Austrasian Monarch, taking advantage of the late event, flattered

A. D. flattered himself, that, by his appearance in the capital, he should share a portion of the dominions of the deceased ; but the King of Burgundy directed that the gates should be shut against him, and treated with insult the ambassadors, who demanded, in the name of their sovereign, a ratification of the agreement by which the son of Sigebert had an equal authority in that city, and required that Fredegonde should be delivered up, to atone for the enormities she had committed. Gontran avowed himself the guardian of the person, and of the dominions of the King of Soissons ; and, by this steady and equitable mode of proceeding, he disappointed the aspiring views of Childebert, and, during the remainder of his reign, preserved an equal balance between the contending queens ; for Brunehaut had now a considerable influence in the councils of her son.

The regular government of the King of Burgundy checked the progress of that encroaching influence, which, even so early, began to be assumed by the principal ministers, at their respective courts. To regain their importance, Didier, Mummol, and Boson, the three most powerful, conspired to raise to the regal dignity Gondebaud, then residing at Constantinople, and a reputed son of Clotaire the First. Brunehaut, to perplex the Burgundian monarch, persuaded her son to espouse the cause of the usurper ; but Gontran having prevailed upon him, by his remonstrances, to repair  
to



to the court of Orleans, and highly pleased at his dependence upon his honour, presented him to the people as his successor, restored to him those places which had been taken from him, and bade him beware of the traitors who surrounded his person, and had so ill advised him. After this admonition, the two princes parted in perfect amity and peace. A. D.

As for Gondebaud, the pageant of royalty, he did not live to enjoy the mockeries of a throne: he was betrayed by Mummol, and murdered by Boson; the former of whom fell a victim to the treachery of his confederates; his army was delivered up to Gontran; the chief conspirators were destroyed, and a conclusion put to this formidable revolt.

Gontran having regulated some domestic concerns in the kingdom of Soissons, turned his arms to the assistance of Childebert, then employed against the Visigoths in Spain. This war, in which the Franks were wholly unsuccessful, was obstinately prosecuted for many years, to revenge the cause of Ingonde, the sister of the Sovereign of Metz, and who had also entered into an alliance with the Emperor Maurice, against the Lombards, imitating in his conduct the duplicity of his predecessors, receiving subsidies from both princes.

During the four last years of the life of Gontran, France enjoyed an interval of tranquillity.

This



A. D. This prince, who died in his sixtieth year, and  
593. in the thirty-second of his reign, is represented  
as a peaceable, pious, but a timid and inconstant monarch. Affecting to despise grandeur, he was above all things attached to power; he chastised with rigour small delinquencies, yet was fearful to punish flagitious crimes: he was, in short, a mixture of contending passions; and was neither conspicuous for his virtues, nor remarkable for his crimes.


His extensive dominions descended to his nephew, the sovereign of Austrasia. The youthful kings, now unchecked by the authority of their late uncle, and instigated by the inveteracies of Fredegonde and Brunehaut, did not long preserve their dominions in peace. In the same year Childobert invaded the kingdom of Soissons: he was engaged and defeated, with a prodigious slaughter of his troops, by Fredegonde, at Tourcy, on the river Delette. Elated by her success, she prevailed upon the Bretons and Varnes to make an irruption into the Austrasian territories. Against the former he did not obtain any advantage; but more fortunate in his contest with the latter, a people who possessed the country in the neighbourhood of Leyden, he entirely extirpated them; but this victory was doomed to be his last display of arms; he died soon afterwards, in the twenty-sixth year of his age, having swayed the sceptre twenty-one. Theodobert, his eldest son, succeeded him in the kingdom of Austrasia; and  
Thierri,

Thierri, his youngest, in that of Burgundy ; under the regency of Brunehaut, who exercised an equal influence over both the courts. A. D. 596.

Upon the death of Childebert, Fredegonde, ever ready to take advantage of any event that could perplex or make abortive the intrigues of her rival, seized upon the city of Paris, and upon some other places of importance, that were situated upon the borders of the Seine. Having assembled a powerful army, she obtained a signal victory over the Austrasians, who were sent to oppose her. In the height of her prosperity she was suddenly arrested by the hand of death, after a life of atrocities disgraceful to human nature ; and in which, for nearly the space of thirty years, she had governed with absolute power, the various dominions of her husband and her son. 597.

Brunehaut acquired strength by this unexpected event, and her will, however unbounded, became law in the court of Metz : but, from her abuse of power, her influence declined ; and a woman of inadequate birth, whom Theodobert had raised to to his bed and throne, by her contrivance and consent, became now the instrument of her disgrace. The young queen united with the nobles against her, and gained so much upon the ear of the king, as to prevail upon him to consent to her banishment. She retired to the King of Burgundy, and betrayed, as yet, no resentment for the disgrace she had suffered ; but prevailed upon

Thierri

A. D.  Thierri to attempt a recovery of Paris, and of those other possessions which had been wrested from their dominions by Fredegonde; at the same time obtaining the assistance and alliance of Recared, the king of the Visigoths. Theodobert, gratified with this proceeding, offered to join his brother in his projected invasion of the territories of the King of Soissons.

Clotaire the Second, not much their superior in years, met his youthful competitors in their own dominions. The conflict was arduous, impetuous, and bloody; but the exertions of the former sunk beneath the better fortune of his assailants; and his army was routed, and almost entirely destroyed. He retired to Melun: from  
600. thence he sought a refuge in the forest of Bretonne, near the Seine; and was at last constrained to resign a considerable portion of his dominions, to preserve in peace a small portion of the whole.

The succeeding years are not marked by any events to interest the feelings of the reader, or to arrest the pen of the historian: continual wars, and alternate success, among the princes, and the vices and intrigues of Brunehaut, make up the sanguinary record: we shall therefore pass over the intervening circumstances, until the brothers met  
612. upon the plains of Tolbiac. In this battle Theodobert was taken prisoner, and carried to Cologne, where, after having suffered every personal mark of inhumanity and insult from Thierri, he

he was divested of his regal distinctions, and sent, A. D. thus degraded, to Brunehaut, at Chalons: his two sons were put to death; and the unfortunate King of Austrasia was shaved, and shortly afterwards consigned to the same fate. The King of Burgundy survived but a short period these inhuman assassinations; for, in an intended invasion of the dominions of Clotaire, he contracted a disorder, which carried him off, in the twenty-sixth year of his age, and in the seventeenth of his reign.

613.

Sigebert, the eldest of his four sons, was declared his successor; and Brunehaut, who had been suspected of poisoning the late king, now flattered herself that she should be able to govern, with her accustomed sway, the two kingdoms of Burgundy and Austrasia; but Clotaire, who had a numerous party in those countries, and a powerful army in the field, encouraged the flattering idea that he should soon unite in his own person the whole monarchy of the Franks. The universal detestation in which Brunehaut was held, and the discovery of secret plans which she had formed against Garnier, the mayor of Austrasia, hastened her destruction. She was betrayed into the hands of the King of Soissons, together with the four sons of Thierri. Sigebert and Corbon were put to death. What became of Childebert, is not known. Meroveus having some claim upon the affection of the king, as he had been his sponsor in baptism,



A. D. baptism, was permitted to pass the remainder of his days in privacy and peace; but as the vindictive spirit of his mother towards the unfortunate queen, seemed to devolve to him, he condemned her to be exposed for three days, in the camp, to the reproaches of the nobility, and to the insults of the populace. She was afterwards tied to a horse, that was taken up wild from the forest, and which put an end, at once, to her existence and her crimes.

Whatever might have been the vices and the enormities of her life, the barbarous severity of her fate makes some atonement for their commission; nor can we help recurring, in measuring her delinquencies, to the natural death of Fredegonde, her rival in wickedness, but who had the good fortune to escape the rigours of punishment.

Clotaire the Second, at the age of thirty-three years, became the sole possessor of the various dominions of France; and not having any external enemies to dread, nor any internal conspiracies to shake the firmness of his throne, he turned his thoughts to the regulation of the state, and to the amendment and execution of the laws. He convoked the bishops of the different dioceses of his kingdom, who established proper canons for the discipline and government of the church. He secured, by his edicts, the properties of those who had been despoiled of their effects by the rapacity and injustice of Thierry and Brunehaut; and he  
abandoned



the territories of Aquitaine, destroyed the country, <sup>A. D.</sup> plundered and burnt the cities; nor could Eudes oppose to their devastations any force, but a flying camp, being utterly incapable of encountering their numbers in the field.

Well aware of the dangers with which all France was threatened by the success of these invaders, the Duke of Austrasia assembled a well-disciplined army of his best French and German troops, and came in fight of the Saracens between the cities of Poitiers and of Tours. Six days were passed in desultory contest, without the least advantage gained by either side; when, on the seventh, as if ashamed of this ignominious state of inactivity, the son of Pepin commenced the attack, with a fervor and intrepidity correspondent to the magnitude of the cause. For a while the Moorish power successfully opposed their valiant assailants. Victory was long suspended; nor did either army pause from conflict, until Eudes, falling upon the camp of the enemy, destroyed the tents, put to death their women and children, and, by calling off their attention from the field of battle, gave a decided turn to the fortune of the day. The rout became general, the slaughter indiscriminate, and the body of Abderhamen was found among the slain. The loss sustained by the Saracens has been magnified to the enormous amount of 375,000 men, with the amazing disproportion of only 1500 of the  
I French.

A. D. French. However exaggerated this account may  
732—6 be, this celebrated battle was conclusive. The  
Moors, taking advantage of the shadows of the night, dared not abide the approach of morning; but quitting their remaining tents, with the most considerable part of their baggage, retired with precipitation into Septimania, now Languedoc. The ensuing day, the victorious army, perceiving no vestiges of the discomfited, satisfied with their success, or arrested by the immense quantity of booty which they found, judged it more expedient to reap the fruits of their victory, than to follow an enemy from whom there was not any thing more to gain. This glorious event confirmed the welfare of Christianity; and Charles was destined, the next year, to receive an acquisition of glory, in a second irruption of the Saracens, whom he defeated in the above-mentioned province, and made himself master of the city of Avignon.

Upon the death of Eudes, he repaired with celerity to Aquitaine; and, assuming the rights of the late Sovereign, bestowed his territories upon Hunalde, the eldest son of that Prince, reserving to himself the absolute claims of homage and obedience, independently of the rights of Thierri, who died much about this time, having held the title of King seventeen years; nor did he think it necessary to name a successor to the crown, as his own power was sufficiently established without the introduction of a phantom,  
who

who might occupy space without being essential to the duties of action. PoPON, the Duke of the Frizons, the last who possessed that title, he slew in an engagement that followed a little after his late successes; and he himself nominated, in future, the governors of that province. A. D.


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While Charles was busily employed in extending his power, the chief officers of the kingdom of Burgundy excited a revolt: he flew to the scene of commotion; allayed the tumults at Lyons, and restored peace to Dauphiny; he settled the government of Provence, and recovered Arles and Marseilles: from thence his attention was called off by the Saxons, whom he so thoroughly humbled, that they were not in a condition, for many years afterwards, to disturb the tranquillity of France. But, as he was himself an usurper, he found it no easy matter to prevent the different governors from assuming an equal degree of power in the above provinces: for three years they kept him continually employed; nor were the Saracens disinclined to encourage the spirit of revolt. MOURONTES, who commanded in Marseilles, delivered up to them, as a barrier to oppose his power, the city of Avignon, of which they did not, however, long retain the possession; it surrendered, after a vigorous siege, to the Duke of Aufrasia: a part of the town was burnt; and a considerable

A. D. number of the unbelievers were put to the edge of the sword. The next year he again repulsed the Saracens, drove them back to Narbonne, and to the few other places of safety they possessed on this side the Pyrenean mountains; and sent a considerable succour to the Spaniards, who were struggling, with some effect, to re-establish their ancient government.

In Italy, Luitprand, taking advantage of the confusion that had prevailed on account of the edict of the Emperor Leo Isauricus, respecting the worship of images, had fallen upon the dominions of the church. This latter Prince, having been reproached by the Saracens for his adoration of figures of stone and wood, had given orders that they should be indiscriminately destroyed throughout his dominions, extending those commands to the territories which the successors of St. Peter began to consider as their own. The two Gregorys, the Second, and the Third, had violently opposed this measure; but the Papal Power had been again reconciled to the Imperial Court; when these hostile intentions of the King of Lombardy induced the sovereign Pontiff to address, with great humility, a letter of supplication to the only Power whose influence or arms he could flatter himself were able to arrest the progress of his enemy. Sending the keys of the tomb of St. Peter, he offered to proclaim Charles  
Consul



Consul of Rome, and to renounce his allegiance A. D.  
to the Greek Emperor; but the Duke of Austrasia,   
harassed and fatigued by a life of continual action,  
and finding his health, in consequence of his  
exertions, very sensibly decline, had receded from  
the bustle of politics, to the tranquillity of leisure,  
and the charms of peace. While solacing him-  
self with a rational retirement at his palace of  
Verberie upon the river Oise, he fell into a  
languor of body and indolence of mind, which  
nature and art were unable to overcome. Three  
successive embassies from the Papal Chair were  
ineffectual to rouse his wonted activity; but,  
conscious of his approaching end, having lived  
like a hero, he was willing to die like a philo-  
sopher and a Christian. He listened with com-  
placency, indeed, to the last supplication of the  
Pope; but while this weighty matter was in agi-  
tation, the Emperor, the sovereign Pontiff, and  
the illustrious Charles himself, discharged, and,  
within a few months of each other, the common,  
but the awful debt of nature. The latter, assu-  
ming the rights of a sovereign Prince just before  
his death, summoned the chief Nobility, and,  
with their consent, divided his dominions among  
his sons. By his two wives, Rotrude and Sonne-  
childe, he left Carloman, Pepin, and Gripon,  
with several illegitimate children. To the first  
he assigned Austrasia, with his German territories;  
to the second, Burgundy, Neustria, and Provence;



A. D. and to the third, a very small portion of inheritance: breathing his last on the 20th of October, 741. at Crecy upon the Oise, three leagues from Noyon, in the fifty-second year of his age, and in the twenty-fifth of his administration.

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The superior talents, and the military endowments of Charles, although they derived advantage from the splendid example of his father, are justly entitled to praise, and deserving the gratitude of posterity. He saved France from the overwhelming and fanatic power of the Saracens; and, by so doing, checked the progress of a religion which threatened, in its course of rapid success, to subjugate all Europe; and yet we find the legendary pages of the Monks teeming with resentment against the defender of his country, and full of execration against the saviour of Christendom. He applied, indeed, the spiritual concerns of the church to the safety of the kingdom; circumstanced as he was, it seemed unavoidable: they have not however scrupled to denounce against him their most bitter anathemas, and to enroll his name upon the list of the damned.

Undaunted alike in adversity as in the field, and imitating the virtues of his father, he became himself an object of imitation. Moderate and humane, amidst the triumphs of arms, he never forgot the duties of the man. Successful almost

almost beyond example, he was neither inflated A. D.  
by victory, nor, although at the head of an extensive empire, intoxicated by power. He assumed no other title, during the splendid career of his life, than that of the Mayor of the Palace; but permitted foreign Princes to style him Viceroy, and Lord Lieutenant of the kingdom; and by some historians he is called Duke, and King of France, and also Consul, and Patrician.

His activity of body, and celerity of motion, were inconceivable: fatigue and distance were opposed in vain to check the progress of his arms. His surname of Martel, or *the Hammer*, was probably bestowed upon him after his death, on account of the heavy hand which he laid upon the revenues of the church; it has been also asserted that he derived it from the weight of his blows in his personal and successful conflict with the Saracens: to whatever it may have been owing, it has given him a distinctive appellation in the annals of his country.

A. D.



## CHAPTER VII.

FROM THE DEATH OF CHARLES TO THE DEATH  
OF PEPIN.


Gripon besieged in Laon by Carloman and Pepin—taken prisoner—Pepin restores Childeric to the thrones of Neustria and Burgundy—Carloman and Pepin defeat the Dukes of Bavaria, of the Saxons, and of the Alemanni—Repulse Hunalde, the Duke of Aquitaine—Who resigns his dominions to his son Vaifar—Carloman retires to a Benedictine Abbey on Mount Cassino—Reflections—Pepin liberates Gripon from confinement—Defeat of the Duke of Saxony—Gripon seizes upon Bavaria—Pepin restores Bavaria to Tassilon—Childeric deposed, and Pepin elevated to the throne.—Extinction of the Merovingian Princes.

SHORT was the duration of that calm in which the extensive dominions of France were left by the victorious Martel. Gripon, disgusted at the unjust partiality of his father, early endeavoured to disturb the government assigned his brothers; or rather, what is by far more probable, and which we are led to believe, was obliged to defend the small portion of inheritance which was allotted him, and which they were unwilling that he should enjoy. Assisted by his mother, Sonnechild, he retired to the city of Laon, in the Isle of France, and sustained with fortitude a vigorous siege from the united arms of the sons of Rotrude. His opposition was not equal to his hopes; he was obliged to surrender himself  
to

to his opponents: his mother was dismissed to A. D. a convent, and he became a prisoner at Châteauneuf, in the forest of Ardennes.

The close union and fraternal harmony that subsisted between Carloman and Pepin was productive of the best effects, notwithstanding the late attempt to shake their influence, and the precarious title by which they held their power. They still found themselves able to oppose, and to suppress the combinations of the Alemanni, the Bavarians, and the Gascons; who revolted upon the death of Charles; yet, the better to conciliate the good-will of the people, who still looked back with reverence to the line of Clovis, and to check the turbulence of the Nobles, Pepin thought it necessary to restore to Childeric, of the royal line, and the supposed son of Thierry of Chelles, the nominal title of King of Neustria and Burgundy. Carloman, in whatever light he might have viewed this conduct, found himself so perfectly established in the affections of the Austrasians, and considering that kingdom to be his separate and hereditary right, that he continued to govern it as its lawful sovereign; nor was it long before both his brother and himself were roused to vindicate and preserve the power and dominions bequeathed them by their invincible father, the late Martel.

The enterprising Sonnechilde had found means, notwithstanding her confinement, to effect a marriage

A. D. riage between Odilon, the Duke of Bavaria, and  Hiltrude, a sister of Pepin; and had prevailed upon him to take up arms in her favour. Theodorick the Duke of the Saxons, and Theodobald, the Sovereign of the Alemanni, alarmed, from motives of safety, at the growing power of the sons of Charles, readily entered into an alliance; and, having assembled a formidable army, encamped upon a strong and advantageous post, with the river Lech in their front, the better to protect and secure their entrenchments; intending by delay to harass, and, by avoiding an engagement, to impel the enemy to an unequal attack, or to break the strength and spirit of their forces.

Conscious of the necessity of a vigorous campaign, the brothers assembled the whole power of the Franks, and speedily repaired to the enemy's country: fifteen days they remained within sight of the confederates, without attempting to pass the river; but, irritated at length beyond forbearance by the taunts and reproaches of their opponents, they seized a favourable moment to pass the stream, favoured by the darkness of the night, and unexpectedly appearing at dawn of day before the camp of the allies, began a sudden and furious attack upon their entrenchments. The Bavarians alone, for a while, withstood the power of their arms; but, constrained at length to yield to superior




rior valour, they were put to flight, leaving their A. D. baggage, with a considerable number of their men, to the mercy of the victors. The conquerors remained in the province for several months, to gather the fruits of their success: and having spread desolation over the territories of the enemies, the three Dukes gladly embraced, by a promise of future allegiance and fidelity, the proffered peace. 743.

The following year Carloman and Pepin turned their arms against Hunalde, the Duke of Aquitaine, who, during their expedition into Germany, had passed the Loire, penetrated as far as Chartres, inflicting the most unfeeling cruelties upon the inhabitants, and consuming with fire a part of that city, with its magnificent cathedral, marking, in his course, the hand of the Barbarian, in the wanton destruction of the works of art: but so completely were these acts of hostility retaliated upon the destroyer, that the defeated Sovereign, in pity to his unfortunate subjects, was obliged to submit to any terms the victors thought proper to impose. In this state of abject humiliation, and disappointed in the hopes his ambition had formed, he resigned his dominions, which he could not protect, to Vaifar his son, and retired, mortified and disgraced, to lament the futility of empire, and to seek for consolation, if it were there to be found, in the silent tranquillity of a cloister, in those days the retreat of a bigot, and but seldom

A. D. seldom the reward of conscious piety and internal worth.


744. Having so successfully restored peace on the side of Aquitaine; and having secured, in various expeditions into Germany, the quiet of that country; Carloman determined to resign the sword of warfare, to forget the world and its allurements, and to pass the remainder of his days in devotion and obscurity. It would be in vain to inquire into his motives, or to account for a resolution so unexpected and extraordinary. Whether or no it was a circumstance of joy or regret to Pepin, it can be but of little consequence to enquire; it is sufficient that the fact be ascertained, and that he left open to his brother that career of glory, which he was satisfied himself to forego. He fixed his spiritual residence in a Benedictine Abbey, upon Mount Cassino in Italy, where he dedicated the remainder of his days to religious solitude, without affecting the superstitious austerity of the Ascetics, who mortified the body without subduing the passions of the mind.

A life so brilliant in public, let not the severity of reason disapprove, nor condemn a prince who leaves the world while he has the tender attachments of the father to endear him to it. Strange as it is, it does not appear that he left his two sons any particular establishments, or that he even made any stipulation with Pepin for their future support: it is natural, however, to suppose that

that he did not renounce the world, disgusted with A. D. its cares, to subject those to miseries who were  746. about to enter upon it.

A prince of a liberal turn of mind has more opportunity to extend the sphere of his benevolence in the walks of a public life, than he can possibly find within the limited precincts of a cloister; yet may retirement give rise to, and help to foster, particular virtues which would remain unnoticed amidst the din of arms, and might be lost for want of sufficient leisure to bring them forth. From silence and tranquillity the most valuable lessons have been produced; lessons that have helped, by proving the horrors of war, and the follies of ambition, to establish happiness through the medium of peace. When a monastery becomes the consolation of piety, or the refuge of age; the man who is thus apparently lost to the world, may yet afford something from a well-turned mind that may be of future importance to social life; and the time may yet come, when it will be found that the hand of reformation has pressed too heavily upon those sanctuaries of declining mortality, in which the weakly might have received support—the wretched, comfort—and the Christian, hope.

By the secession of Carloman from the cares of empire, and the precarious continuation of human grandeur, Pepin was left to wield the sceptre, and to protect the throne. To make  
apparent

A. D.  apparent the regret with which he had looked upon the abdication of his brother, he released Gripon from his confinement, assigned him extensive domains with an ample revenue, and treated him with distinguished marks of confidence and favour: but the bonds of gratitude, and the instinctive ties of nature, held but a feeble influence over his turbulent and ambitious mind; for, while the prudent successor of Charles was busily employed in the settlement of the internal government of the kingdom, no way discouraged by his former misfortunes, he incited Theodoric, the Duke of Saxony, to revolt, whose troops, unsuccessful in his enterprise, were defeated: he was a third time made a prisoner, and his personal fate from thence has been buried in silence. The instigator of these troubles, invited into Bavaria, as to a place of refuge from the resentment of his brother, added treachery to ingratitude, by seizing upon the government of that kingdom, and possessing himself of the persons of his sister, with her infant son Tassilon; a measure to which he was encouraged by the recent death of Odilon, the Duke of that country.

More exasperated at his faithless conduct, than provoked by the frequent conspiracies formed against himself, the offended Pepin marched into Bavaria with a powerful army, restored to Tassilon his wrested dominions, and, with a moderation that was characteristic of his government, forebore even reproaches so well merited, and conferred



conferred upon Gripon the title of Duke, in- A. D.  
vesting him, at the same time, with a very con-  
siderable sovereignty. 747.

There was now but little more wanting to establish this illustrious character upon the throne of France, than the ceremony of consecration; a pre-eminence of station which his politics, his prudence, and his virtues, gave him some claim to possess. His power was extensive: his enemies had been humbled by his valour, his friends made grateful by his liberality; the clergy were reconciled by his munificence; and the nobles were mostly indebted to his family for their exaltation. In the vigour of life, and the possession of all that could contribute to either its comforts or its splendor, there still remained a wish to gratify; and as his arm had so successfully wielded the sword, it was now doomed that his temples should be encircled with that crown the splendor of which he had so conspicuously found the means to brighten. The coronet which had pressed the forehead of the Duke, was now made to resign its place for the diadem of the King. However trifling might be the obstacles towards his elevation, yet he found it necessary to silence the scruples of his conscience, by a recourse to the spiritual authority, and to the paternal approbation of the Pope. He inquired of Zachary, "whether a nation might not venture to elevate a Minister to the throne, whom they might deem capable to sustain its cares,



A. D. 748. cares, reflect a lustre upon its government, and who should be the means to render the people happy, although such an innovation should infringe upon the rights of a race of Princes who had not been more distinguished for their incapacity, than stigmatized for the variety, and enormity of their crimes."

It may here be asked, why those Monarchs were incapable, or why they deserved the degrading appellation of sluggards? Cut off from every personal influence, and from every political advantage that education could give, or society improve; at one time, labouring under the influence of bold and vindictive women; at another, obscured by the overshadowing authority of their subjects; is it to be wondered at, if, from a want of example and opportunity, the seasons were suffered to pass by unexplored, and that they were contented to wear the crown without being embarrassed by its cares? If those only were to enjoy it, who, from conduct and virtue, are entitled to pre-eminence, how many thrones would be without a possessor, and how few subjects would be found worthy to fill them! Since the time of Pepin we have seldom seen a Sovereign so capable, or so worthy of royalty; yet his dismissal of the rightful heirs was neither strictly consonant to morality, nor to justice: but policy regards not the first as an obstacle to its views; and the ambitious do not always consider the necessity of the last.

It

It was not difficult to divine what would be the replication of the Holy Father, who, doubtless, foresaw, in the protection of the future King of France, the many advantages that would result to the Papal Chair: a favourable answer might conciliate his friendship and support, and a barrier be thus formed against the power of the Lombards, and the authority and intrigues of the Imperial Court.

A. D.  
751.

The Pope decided without hesitation against the descendant of the sluggish Kings: an assembly was convened at Soissons; and Pepin was anointed by the hands of Boniface, Bishop of Mentz, the celebrated Apostle of the Germans, who had been an English monk, and known by the name of Winifred. Childeric, who in fact cannot be said to have ever reigned, was shaved, and became a monk in the Sistran monastery, now St. Bertin, in the city of St. Omer; his wife Gesilie took the veil in the convent of Conchiliac; and his son Thierry assumed the monastic habit in the cloister of Vandrill, in Normandy.

Thus terminated a line of Princes whose reigns have been only distinguished in the annals of their country by rapacity, confusion, and civil war, and whose private characters, excepting in a very few instances, were stained with enormities the most disgusting and sanguinary to be met with in tracing the history of any nation, either ancient or modern. To those barbarous times which

K

marked

A. D. marked the more early Monarchs of the Merovingian race, succeeded, in those of the latter Princes, some years of prudent and vigorous administration under the government and abilities of the Mayors of the Palace, who, again cementing the dismembered empire of France, so injudiciously divided by Clovis and his sons, became themselves the possessors of the crown they had saved, and by a similar division in the first, and a like weakness in the last Kings, paved the way for a corresponding fall in the final extinction of their descendants.

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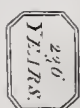
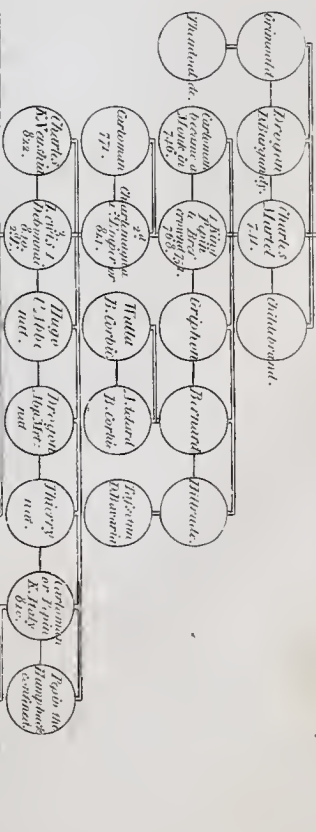
## CHAPTER VIII.

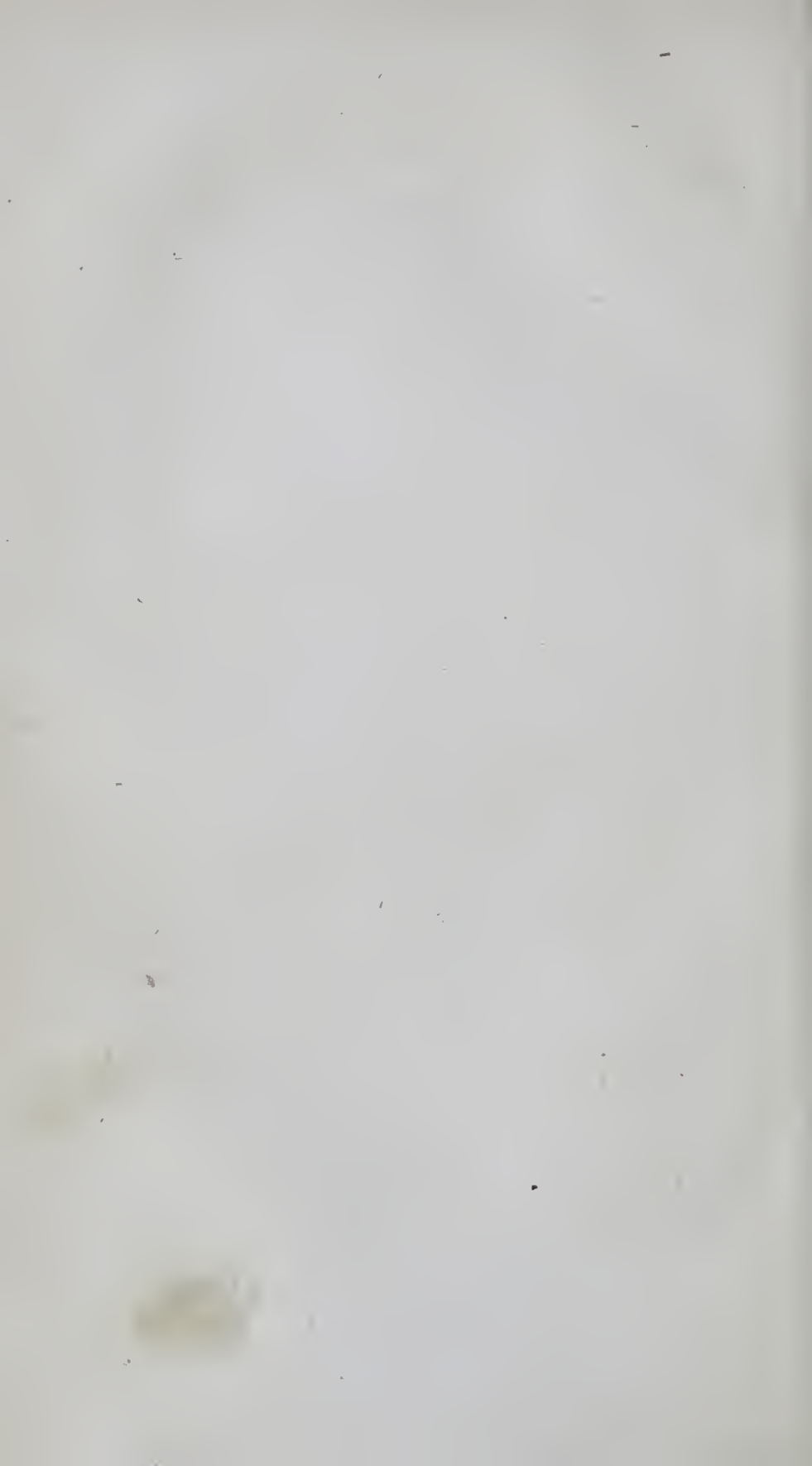
FROM THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE REIGN, TO  
THE DEATH, OF PEPIN.

The Saxons and Bretons defeated by Pepin—Reduction of Narbonne—Gripon slain—Astulphus, King of Lombardy, invades the dominions of the church—Stephen the Third solicits the assistance of Pepin—Who besieges Astulphus in Pavia—Recovers the Papal possessions—Pepin's donation to the church—Astulphus makes a second attempt, and is again repulsed by Pepin—Embassy from the Greek Emperor—Revolt of the Saxons—Vaifar's inroads into Burgundy—Is slain—Conquest of Aquitaine—Death of Pepin—His character.

THE elevation to which he had so long aspired having been thus prudently attained, it was soon found that Pepin was every way equal  
to

Expin  
oita, 711  
14. 711.







to the station he had assumed; and that the A. D.  
courage displayed in the field was not more con-  
spicuous, than the firmness of the legislator, the  
acuteness of the politician; and the compassionate  
virtues of the man. Having established his au-  
thority, he directed his views to the regulation  
of the State, and to the comfort of his people.  
In the first years of his reign he set himself  
seriously to establish a better polity, and to in-  
troduce a reform in the manners of his subjects;  
and more particularly attended to the discipline  
of the church. He assembled a council at his  
palace of Verberie, where, among other useful  
institutions, he assiduously promoted proper regu-  
lations for marriages, which the licentiousness of  
the times, the multiplicity and continuance of  
wars, had so much interrupted, and which it  
was necessary to bring back to decency and  
respect: but these projects, which have seldom  
an opportunity to take root unless fostered by  
the protective seasons of peace, were soon inter-  
rupted by the necessary preparations for war; and  
the internal government of the kingdom was  
postponed for the contentions of the field.

The Saxons, ever impatient of controul, and  
zealous in defence of their national customs and  
independency, endeavoured to lighten the yoke by  
which they were oppressed; and Pepin was again  
called into action, to repress their disobedience:  
he once more defeated their armies, and aug-

A. D. mented their tribute. Equally successful against the Bretons, he made himself master of Vannes, and their Count submitted.

The Saracens, being still in possession of Narbonne, began a successful inroad into the province of Languedoc. Anxious to commence his royal career by some act of popularity and splendor, the King of France proceeded with his army to besiege the city. His assaults were vigorous, but abortive: constrained to raise the siege, he changed his attack into a blockade. Well secured by fortifications, the Moors sustained the shock of his arms, and the stratagems that were put in practice for their reduction, during the space of three years: at length harassed out by an unavailing opposition, they were obliged to surrender to the better fortune of the assailants; and Pepin had the glory to add to his newly-acquired dominions, a city famous for its opposition to his father's authority, and which he had found it impracticable to reduce.

The ambitious spirit of Gripon suffered him not long to enjoy the comforts of fraternal peace: restless himself, he was anxious to disturb the tranquillity of others. Insensible alike to the favours he had received, or to the misfortunes he had endured, he fled from Mans to the Court of the Duke of Aquitaine, expecting to induce that prince to become his protector and his friend; but Vaifar, unwilling or unprepared to draw upon himself

himself the resentment of the Gallic Monarch, A. D. refused him the asylum to which he had resorted. Frustrated in these hopes, he turned his views to the King of Lombardy, and was slain in the valley of Morienne, as he was endeavouring to force himself a passage into Italy.

The attention of Pepin was now required to disperse a tempest that was brewing in another quarter, and which threatened with destruction the dominions of the church. Zachary had, by the course of nature, dropped into the tomb; and Stephen the Third had been elevated to the sacred honours of the apostolic chair: the wise policy of his predecessor was now found amply justified by the efficient gratitude of the newly-created King of France.

Astulphus, who, by the abdication of Rachid, had been elevated to the throne of Lombardy,—ambitious to become the only sovereign of Italy, was less disposed to follow the indolent politics of his predecessor, who had resigned the sword of warfare for the peaceful retirement of a monastic life, than to embrace the favourable opportunity which now opened to him the prospect of glory, and flattered him with the full accomplishment of his aspiring views. The Greek Emperor, Constantine Capronymus, he well knew, was unable to check his progress, being engaged in a war with the Bulgarians and the Saracens, and in one still

A. D. more perplexing, with the Iconoclastes, or the  
 753. Image-breakers.

Not more sanguine than justified by the successful commencement of his various enterprizes, he had invaded, with a powerful army, the Imperial dominions; reduced the city of Ravenna, with the whole Exarchate; and, having made himself master of the Pentapolis, threatened to besiege the ancient capital of the world, if not immediately acknowledged the sovereign of that city; and, the better to enforce his demand, proceeded with his army to that neighbourhood.

The Holy Father, in this emergency, having attempted, but in vain, to arrest, by spiritual mediation, the torrent that was about to overwhelm him, turned his views, and directed his trembling steps, to the Court of France. Not unmindful of his former obligations to Zachary—Pepin received with duty and respect the insulted Stephen, entertained him in the palace of St. Denis, where, during a severe fit of sickness, he waited himself upon him with affectionate perseverance, and humane concern; and so soon as his recovery was established, the diadem was gratefully placed by the hand of the Pontiff upon the brows of his benefactor.

These assiduities of the head of a powerful nation towards a feeble old man, and a fugitive, reflect a signal honour upon the private character  
 of

A. D.

754.

of Pepin; nor should circumstances so favourable to human nature be passed over in silence, as greatness of soul is more often seen to illuminate the paths of solitude, and to spread a cheering ray over the wants and miseries of domestic life, than to blaze in the sunshine of a court, and to irradiate with its beams the bosom of the king.

From the hands of the Pope, the Gallic Monarch received, a second time, the sacred unction: the ceremony was accompanied by the flattering title of “the Protector and the Defender of the Roman People;” a distinctive appellation of no little consequence, in the times of superstition and prejudice, to those who bare it; and, in this particular instance, of singular importance to the crafty prelate who had bestowed it; and who, to enhance the solemnity of the occasion, at the same time anointed his sons Charles and Carloman, conferring upon them the honourable names of “Patricians of Rome.”

Pepin having failed in his endeavours to negotiate with Astulphus, conducted the Holy Father into Italy with a sufficient force to reinstate him in his rights, and besieged the Lombard King in Pavia. Unable to resist the arms of his opponent, he promised to deliver up the conquests he had made, and which were generously surrendered by the French Monarch to the domains of the church; comprehending the Exarchate,



A. D. *Æ*milia, now Romania, and the Pentapolis, now Marca d'Ancona. The Kings of France retained a kind of negative superiority in these possessions; but, as their power declined, their nominal authority likewise proportionably decayed. Thus was the spiritual influence of the papal authority augmented by temporal dominions; and this æra forms a striking epoch in the ecclesiastical history of Rome; and laid the foundation of that tyranny which made the most imperious monarchs crouch beneath the thunders of the Vatican—absolved the subject from his oath of allegiance—tore the diadem from the brow of royalty—and insulted and degraded the Imperial dignity of the purple.

With the departure of his benefactor, the terrors of the Pontiff returned. Unmindful of the solemn treaty in which he had lately engaged, the Sovereign of Lombardy refused to evacuate a single town; and early in the year undertook the siege of Rome, requiring from the citizens the person of Stephen, as the only means by which they might hope to mollify his resentment. In this dilemma he had again recourse to the assistance of Pepin; and the elegant epistles which were written in the hour of his distress, and which are still existing, had so powerful an effect upon the King, that he again repassed the Alps, and flew in person to his relief. The fears of the Holy Father were dispersed by his appearance: Astulphus was chastised for his breach of faith; con-

constrained, a second time, to sue for peace; to A. D. submit to terms still more disgraceful than those which had been before imposed; and to receive with humiliation the burden of the ancient tribute, which had been relinquished in the reign of Clo-taire the Second.

Whilst engaged in the siege of Pavia, the Emperor, Constantine Capronymus, deputed an embassy to Pepin, to remonstrate on his late donation. In the hope of detaching him from the party whose interests he had embraced, he sent him magnificent presents, with an offer to defray the expences of the war. The King of France replied to his Ambassadors, that "the Exarchate had been  
" conquered by the Lombards, who therefore held  
" it under the same title that the Romans had formerly done; that their right was now vested  
" in him, and that he was at liberty to dispose  
" of those territories as he thought proper."—"I have bestowed it," said he, "upon St. Peter, that the religion of the church of Rome may remain uncontaminated by the heresies of the  
" Greeks; nor shall any temptation whatever  
" induce me to reclaim the gift I have made,  
" and which I now solemnly pledge myself to  
" maintain."

Upon his return into France, his thoughts were directed from external concerns to regulate the internal government of his kingdom; but his political plans were interrupted by a sudden and general revolt of the Saxons, whose unsuccessful  
endea-

A. D. endeavours to shake off their yoke, only rendered  
760. its pressure more firm and galling.

The tide of prosperity, which had hitherto accompanied this fortunate Prince, continued to attend him in all his undertakings. Having recently settled some disagreements that arose between the Pope, Paul the First, and Desiderius, the successor of Astulphus in Lombardy, he found leisure to attend to the movements of Vaifar, the Duke of Aquitaine. These Sovereigns had long considered each other with mutual distrust, and were equally impatient for a conflict in the field. The Duke, having despoiled of their lands some churches in his own domains, afforded the French Monarch a pretext, by no means an honourable one, to invade his dominions ; but, by a restoration of the objects of contention, the threatened storm was for a while suspended.

The absence of his antagonist, the next year, in his German dominions, was an opportunity which the enterprising spirit of Vaifar was unable to withstand: having entered into Burgundy, he over-ran that province, and continued his depredations as far as the environs of Chalons; but short was his triumph, as was unavailing the ardour of his mind. His rival speedily repaired to the scene of warfare; he left the Saxon insurgents to oppose a more formidable competitor, and, glowing with resentment, passed with celerity the river Loire: the castles of Auvergne were levelled with the ground;  
his

his ravages extended as far as Limoges; and the capital of Aquitaine shook beneath the terrors of his arm. The entire province must inevitably have acknowledged his sovereignty, had not the retreat of Tassilon, the Duke of Bavaria, recalled him from the theatre of his victory abroad, to attend to the welfare of his dominions at home. A. D.  
763.

This Prince, in the early part of his reign, had done homage to Pepin for his dominions, and had principally resided in the city of Paris. The Protector, who had preserved him from the usurpation of Gripon, was now forgotten. To feel, and to acknowledge obligations, appears not to be a lesson in politics; nor does treachery bear such marks of contempt in the public, as in the private, concerns of life.

The French Monarch, equally circumspect, as vigorous in action, contented himself with forming a chain of posts for the security of his frontiers against the sudden incursions of the Bavarians, and, once more, crossed the Loire, determined to prosecute, with celerity and effect, the war in Aquitaine. Three successive campaigns marked the superiority of a discipline founded upon prudence and conduct. His opponent, circumvented by his commanding and active genius, endeavoured, but in vain, to oppose the progress of his arms; he fought, and was defeated; he requested peace, but it was denied him; and Tassilon, intimidated by the success of his uncle, entreated, and obtained



A. D. 767. tained his pardon. The unfortunate Vaifar, pursued with his small but faithful band of followers to his last retreat in the country of Saintonges, submitted, not without a desperate effort, to his hapless fate: imitating in his conduct that of Alaric in a former period, his indignant spirit scorned to preserve an existence which to him was no longer valuable, since it could not be enjoyed with independency. His death, while bravely combating to the last moment of his life, put an end to a destructive war; and his dominions, annexed, once more, to the empire of France, helped to crown, with additional laurels, the brows of the victor.

But of what value was the splendor of this conquest to the mortal whose victories were about to be arrested by the hand of death! Scarcely had Pepin time to contemplate his late acquisition, when he was seized with a fever at Xaintes, which threatened him with a speedy dissolution. Aware of its approach, he was with difficulty conveyed to the Abbey of St. Denis; where, having assembled the principal Bishops and Nobles of his kingdoms, with their advice and consent he divided his dominions between his sons; but in what manner, has not been properly ascertained. Having thus settled his temporal affairs, and resigned himself, like a Christian and a man, to the awful decrees of Heaven—he sunk into the grave, overwhelmed with a complication of disorders, after a glorious reign of seventeen years,




years, in the fifty-fourth of his age; and was A. D.  
interred, according to his own desire, in the <sup>768.</sup> cathedral-church of St. Denis.

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In a diminutive body, from which Pepin obtained the appellation of "The Short," may be traced a capacious soul; as if nature, niggard of her gifts in one respect, had endeavoured to make amends for her deficiencies by signal capacities in another.

The auspicious commencement of his military career was to be no less attributed to fraternal union, than to the vigour and prudence which distinguished his general character. His discipline was firm, and his policy consistent; hence order prevailed in his camp, and unanimity pervaded his councils. He so much conciliated the private, and held such an influence over the public opinion, that no secret intrigues, or open conspiracies, were discovered, to tarnish the lustre of his reign. Cautious in his undertakings, intrepid in attack, and persevering in his resolution, opposition and danger sunk before him; and victory had no sooner crowned his head with laurel, than mercy adorned his hand with the branch of peace.

The national assemblies were convoked with regularity, where, appearing to follow the sentiments of others, he insensibly became the sole director of the cabinet, and the evident inspirer of the operations of the field. He rendered the Popes dependent upon his fame: he  
weakened

 A. D. weakened the power of the Lombards, but insulted not their imbecility. His donation of the Exarchate of Ravenna to the See of Rome, instead of annexing it to his own dominions, was a proof of his penetration. The French had lost numerous armies in Italy, without any permanent conquest: his politics, therefore, induced him to give up what it might have been hazardous and burdensome to retain. The provocations of Gripon, frequent as they were, could not induce him to harshness, delighting as much to pardon, as the other was desirous to offend. The universal joy with which he was received as sovereign, was a flattering tribute of the public esteem towards an individual so worthy to be exalted, and certainly the most distinguished character the nation had beheld since the commencement of its monarchy. Clovis founded his empire in blood; but Pepin established his in justice, and in moderation.

His genius was in all things equal; and he left an immense empire still capable of farther extension: thus Philip paved the way for the victories of Alexander, and Cæsar laid the foundation of the glories of Augustus. The humble epitaph of "Here lies the father of Charlemagne," is an insult to the memory of Pepin, and a disgrace to the nation that left not more honourably recorded those virtues which strangers are proud to dwell upon with reverence, and which have not been surpassed, nor will probably be ever equalled, by his descendants.

## CHAPTER IX.

FROM THE DEATH OF PEPIN, TO THE IMPERIAL  
EXALTATION OF CHARLES.


The succession of Charles and Carloman—Their characters—Hunalde re-assumes the dominion of Aquitaine—Is defeated by Charles—Aquitaine again annexed to France—Death of Carloman—Charles sole monarch—State of Europe—Revolt and defeat of the Saxons—Desiderius, King of Lombardy, attacks the Papal dominions—Pavia and Verona besieged by Charles—Conquest of Lombardy—Massacre of the Saxons—Commutations in Italy—Moorish governors reinstated in Spain by Charles—Death of Orlando—Revolt of the Saxons suppressed—Pepin, King of Italy—Lewis, King of Aquitaine—Witikind instigates the Saxons to rebel—Their defeat—Witikind and Albion excite fresh tumults in Saxony—Conversion of Witikind and Albion—Defeat of the Duke of Beneventum and Bavaria—Conquest of Bavaria—Grimoalde succeeds his father in Beneventum—Legislative and domestic employments of Charles—Repulsion of the Sclavonians and Huns—Traitorous design of Pepin—Suppression of a tumult in Italy—Irruptions of various nations—Subjugation of the Huns—Revolt and slaughter of the Saxons—Dissensions at Rome—Elevation of Charles to the Imperial dignity.

THE appellation of Carlovingian distinguishes the second race of the Kings of France. Whether deduced from Charles Martel, the father of Pepin, or from Charles the Great, or Charlemagne his son, is a point not exactly ascertained by historians: it is, however, clearly demonstrated, that the arms of the last achieved what the other left imperfect;

A. D. imperfect; and that the first opened that road to  
768. political as well as military glory, which his  
grandson pursued with so much vigour and  
success.

Upon his accession to the throne, Charles was in the twenty-fifth year of his age, and as remarkable for the height of his stature as his father had been for his diminutive frame. With a figure well proportioned, but rather inclined to corpulency, he had a complexion that was florid, features full of majesty and sweetness; and a disposition at once open, cheerful, and glowing with animation. His look was penetrating, his mind active, and his constitution so singularly robust, as to enable him to sustain the extremities of exertion, and to be unacquainted with the languors of fatigue.

Carloman, the younger son of Pepin, dissimilar both in his temper and pursuits, was gloomy, reserved, and contentious. Timid and irresolute in all his actions, he was as easily governed by the artful; as led by the interested; and, not being endowed with abilities himself, regarded with jealousy a brother, whose splendid talents prognosticated his future glory. With dispositions so very discordant, it was not likely that unity could long prevail; and we find, very early after the death of their father, that a division menaced the expanding glories of France: but the intrigues of the neighbouring States suspended for a while the threatening

threatening storm, and called off their attention to dangers of more importance. A. D. 

The Lombards, forgetful of the state of degradation to which they had been reduced, began to negociate with Tassilon, the Duke of Bavaria, and to promise themselves success from the internal disputes of the sons of Pepin; but the war had already commenced in a quarter from which the brothers had not formed the least idea of danger, and with whom their enemies had not the most distant intercourse.

Hunalde, the old Duke of Aquitaine, in whom the latent sparks of ambition had been for some time suppressed, but not wholly extinct, having consumed between twenty and thirty years in a cloister, renounced the calm of monastic retirement, to take a turbulent part in the storms of life, and to recommence the career of arms. Conceiving that a favourable opportunity was now offered, by the prudent use of which he might possess himself of his ancient rights, he presented himself with confidence and courage to the regard of his subjects, and entreated with earnestness their future support. However doubtful he might be of their affection, from the universal detestation in which he had formerly been held; yet time had softened their resentment, and misfortunes had awakened their commiseration; they received him with open arms, they seconded his undertakings; and in a few weeks

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760. he had the satisfaction to behold himself the sovereign of those dominions which the active life of Pepin had with difficulty acquired. Short was however the duration of this rapid success: the undaunted Charles, although disappointed of his brothers promised aid in the moment of danger, disdainng to be affected at the treachery of his conduct, pushed boldly forward with his own troops into the territories of his opponent. Astonished at the celerity of his motions, unable to keep the field against his powerful adversary, and deserted by his subjects with as much levity as they had before professed of loyalty and attachment, Hunalde experienced the natural consequences of adversity: he was constrained to solicit a precarious refuge in the territories of Lupus, Duke of Gascony, who, menaced by the resentment of the victor, as weakly betrayed, as he had imprudently granted him his protection. The unfortunate fugitive, doomed once more to retire into the bosom of solitude, was confined; but found the means of escaping, some years afterwards, to the court of Desiderius, the King of Lombardy; and Aquitaine thus again became annexed to the empire of France.

During this war Charles found leisure to draw from Angouleme and Perigord, a colony of his French subjects, whom he established near the borders of the Dordonne, upon a spot distinguished by the name of Fronzac. The successful

ful termination of this initiation of arms ex- A. D.  
tended the power, and promoted a respect for  
the character, of the young King. Desiderius  
was among the first who anxiously sought his al-  
liance, and offered to cement the union, by giving  
his daughter Desiderata in marriage, whom, not-  
withstanding the pressing remonstrances of the  
Pope, Stephen the Fourth, and the obstacle of  
a first wife, yet alive, he condescended to ac-  
cept.

The inveterate dislike which Carloman had but 771.  
ill concealed against his brother, and which had  
been somewhat allayed by the maternal endea-  
vours of Bertha, was again ready to burst forth,  
when, by an event as unexpected as unfortunate,  
the former was suddenly taken off by death, and  
the latter left without a competitor to check or  
disturb his ambitious projects. His Queen, sus-  
picious of the intention of the surviving Monarch,  
fled, with her children, into Italy, and found a  
willing asylum in the court of the Lombard  
King. Highly incensed at the retreat afforded  
the royal fugitives, Charles repudiated the daugh-  
ter of Desiderius, and took possession of the ter-  
ritories of the deceased Sovereign.

Upon this accession of dominion and of conse-  
quence, which devolved upon him by the death  
of Carloman, his empire extended from the Alps  
to the Pyrenean mountains. The northern Ger-  
many was at this time almost entirely possessed by

A. D. the Saxons: under which general name were comprehended all those nations within the banks of the Wefer and the Elbe, extending from the Baltic to the territory of Mentz, and from the German Ocean to the confines of Bohemia, and who yet had not been converted to the doctrines of Christianity. Italy, feeble and divided, was held by the Lombards, who occupied the duchies of Friuli, Spoleto, and Beneventum, with Liguria, Venetia, Tuscany, and the Cottian Alps. The dominions of Naples, and some cities in Calabria, were in the possession of the Emperor of the East. The Exarchate, and the Pentapolis, belonged to the Pope; and the Venetians, by their trade to the Levant, had acquired a considerable sway in the political state of Italy. The Saxons were established in England, and an Heptarchy divided the various provinces of that country. The most fertile provinces of Spain were still held by the Moorish power. Abdarhamen, the splendid King of Cordova, was no more; and already had the Spanish Christians established the kingdoms of Asturias and Navarre. Such was the position of Europe, when Charles became the sole Sovereign of France.

The Saxons, whose innate love of liberty induced them, at the commencement of every reign, to attempt the recovery of that independency they so enthusiastically admired, had begun their wonted hostilities, and refused to satisfy the tribute that  
had

had been imposed upon them by Pepin; but the French Monarch, not displeased at being furnished with a pretence to enter their territories, having sufficient strength to chastise their revolt, and leisure to enforce their obedience, turned the weight of his arms to that quarter. Entering their country with fire and with sword, he flattered himself that this severity would make easy his conquest: but, no ways discouraged by the rigour of his conduct, they made a long and desperate stand in the vicinity of Osnaburg, where they were defeated, with a dreadful slaughter, and obliged to pass, with haste and confusion, the channel of the Weser. The victor pursued his advantage as far as Eresbourg near Paderborn, which fortrefs he demolished, with the celebrated temple that was dedicated to their idol, Irminsil. Intimidated by the destruction of this sacred place, and by the unfavourable issue of their revolt, they implored his clemency, and sued for peace; which he the more readily conceded, as the affairs of Italy required his presence beyond the Alps. Having ordered to be rebuilt, and put into a proper state of defence, the above fortrefs, he returned triumphant into France.

Stephen the Fourth, terrified into his grave by the King of Lombardy, had been succeeded, in the Papal Chair, by Adrian the First. This Prelate, unwilling to offend the King of France, had refused, at the pressing solicitation of Desi-

A. D. derius, to anoint the sons of Carloman. Enraged at this opposition to his wishes, he laid waste the territories of the holy see, and prepared to besiege the capital. In this dilemma, the Pope implored the assistance of the Gallic Monarch. Anxious, as he was, to afford him succour, he found his subjects so averse to an Italian expedition, that he endeavoured to negotiate with the Lombard in behalf of the suppliant. It was not, however, probable that terms of real amity could be agreed upon by Princes who had so many mutual causes of dissatisfaction and distrust: the negotiation proved abortive; and Charles, in a general assembly held at Geneva in the month of May, represented with so much eloquence the distresses of the Pope, and the insults to which himself had been subjected, that he obtained with some difficulty the consent of the Clergy and Nobles to march in person to the relief of Adrian. The intricate passes of the Alps were carefully fortified by Desiderius: the French army, in their first attempt were repulsed; and so rash was the undertaking supposed to be, both by himself and his officers, that a determination was formed to retire in the night;—when Bernard, a natural son of Charles Martel, having forced a narrow defile of the same name among the mountains, the enemy were seized with an unaccountable panic; they abandoned the posts they had fortified with so much strength and skill,




skill, and fled with fear and precipitation; leaving their adversaries to gain the level plains of their fertile provinces with ease and safety. A. D.

Desiderius, unable to keep the field, returned to Pavia; while his son Adalgisus, with the widow and children of Carloman, found a temporary protection in Verona. Both cities were at the same time besieged by the intrepid and indefatigable Charles: the first was gallantly defended by the Lombards; but Adalgisus, having lost all hopes of protecting the latter, escaped to Constantinople. The town was surrendered; and the unfortunate widow of Carloman, with her two sons, fell into the hands of the victor: they were sent into France; and of their subsequent fate no memorial is recorded.


Having turned the siege of Pavia into a blockade, the Gallic Monarch repaired to Rome, to spend the festival of Easter. Received by the Pope with the most flattering marks of cordiality and favour, he renewed the donation of his father to the Apostolic see; and, after a few days conference, they separated, mutually satisfied with the prosperous situation of their affairs.

At Pavia his arms, during his absence, had made but little progress; but what they had been tardy to effect, the plague, that scourge of the human species, enabled him speedily to achieve. After a resistance of six months, Desiderius was obliged to surrender himself, his wife, and children,

A. D. 774.  dren, to the better fortune of his rival: what became of them, is lost, in the same mysterious obscurity, as that in which was involved the fate of the family of Carloman; and thus finally ended the kingdom established by the Lombards, having subsisted for the space of two hundred and six years.

Before his return to France, he repaired a second time to Rome, to consult with the Pope in what manner he should govern and preserve his new dominions in Italy: from thence he hastened to Monza, where he was crowned, by the Archbishop of Milan, with the iron crown used at the coronation of the Lombard Kings, and which is still preserved in that village.

To the countries which he had lately subdued, he left uninterrupted their ancient laws, and local customs; and suffered the Dukes of Friuli, Spoleto, and Beneventum, to retain their respective governments. This moderation had certainly its merit: he knew how to retain, by the policy of his councils, the possessions which he had acquired by the force of his arms: and the dignity of his person, and the affability of his manners, were well adapted to enforce obedience, and to conciliate the affections of his new subjects; yet we may be permitted to doubt whether the Lombards received any advantage from a change of Sovereigns: their Princes had been, generally speaking, conspicuous for their clemency

mency and justice, as they had been distinguished A. D. for the wisdom of their regulations. 

Having pledged himself to govern with mildness, and in the adjudication of civil matters to be entirely directed by their ancient constitution, he retired with his army, and repassed the mountains.

The hasty return of the Gallic Monarch from 775. his recent conquests, may be chiefly attributed to the revolt of the Saxons; they had already possessed themselves of the important fort of Eresbourg, before he was able to put a stop to their depredations. Highly exasperated at their repeated revolts, his sword kept pace with his resentment; he recovered the fortress, passed the Weser, defeated in a decisive action the assembled forces of the enemy; and, apportioning his vengeance to his success, cut off his miserable opponents by a most cruel and indiscriminating slaughter. But, as great prosperity too frequently draws the eye from the contemplation of subordinate danger, a considerable detachment which he had left behind him to defend the passage of the river, from an ideal security, or from a contempt of a barbarous, yet a formidable enemy, were, in their turn, given up to the edge of the sword.

Anxious to return to Italy, which was again in commotion, he was glad to accept their submissions, with the hostages which they offered; at the same

A. D. same time menacing them with unremitting vengeance, if they should fail again in their promised obedience.

776.

Having again passed the Alps, he found that Adalgifus had formed a dangerous confederacy, and that the Duke of Friuli was already in arms: but the active movements of Charles soon crushed their flattering expectations; the Duke was surprised, defeated, and beheaded; and the severity of his fate deterred those who had entered into their views from a discovery of their real sentiments. Having settled a misunderstanding that had arisen between the Pope and the Archbishop of Ravenna, he again left peace to Italy, and returned to Germany, to establish, if possible, tranquillity in that quarter. His presence humbled the restless spirit of the Saxons, whom he found in commotion: but, contented with their submission, and satisfied with their promises of conversion, he granted them the accommodation they required, and passed the winter at his castle of Heristal.

777. In the spring of the year he held a general assembly at Padderborn, at which most of their chiefs attended; and they renewed their oaths of allegiance, and consented to be instructed in the doctrines of the Christian religion; but Witikind, the most active, and deservedly the most eminent of their leaders, disdained to submit, and retired with his followers into Denmark.

During

During his stay at Padderborn, Ibonala, the A. D. Moorish governor of Saragossa, who had revolted from the King of Cordova, repaired thither in person, and in his own name, and in that of the Governor of Arragon, entreated the friendship and assistance of the Sovereign of France. Grati-  
fied by so flattering an application, he prepared to extend his influence in a new quarter; and, in the spring of the year, entered into the province of Navarre, possessed himself of the cities of Pampelona and Saragossa, and successfully penetrated to the river Ebro. Having re-established the Moorish Lords, he repassed the mountains; but the glory of his arms was tarnished by the Gascons in the valley of Roncevalles: it was in this engagement that Orlando, or Roland, the supposed nephew of Charles, and who gave rise to the enchanting fiction of Ariosto, was said to have fallen; and indeed the wildness of the surrounding scenery, the sublime appearance of the mountains, the fantastic forms, and the gigantic masses of the rocks, that rise, like cliffs and ruins, all around, conspire to stamp this place as a proper theatre for the representation of fiction.

Scarcely had his troops time to breath, after the dangers and the difficulties they had encountered, when they were again called to oppose the Saxons, who had extended their ravages upon the Rhine as far as Mayence and Cologne. Witikind, assisted by the Danes, had obtained many advantages:




*A. D.* advantages: but the veteran bands of Charles so severely retaliated the devastations that had been committed, that they were reluctantly compelled to a temporary tranquillity.

781. Apprehensive that his subjects beyond the Alps, accustomed to the presence of their Sovereigns, molested by the Huns on one side, and by the depredations of the Saracens on the other, might be induced to receive Adalgisus, the son of their late Sovereign, as their protector, or might possibly elevate some other prince to the throne; to obviate such an event, he proposed a fourth time to repass the mountains.

The festival of Christmas he celebrated at Pavia, and employed himself for several weeks in the regulation of the internal abuses of the government; he from thence proceeded, with his third wife, Hermengarde, and his two younger sons, to the capital of the Papal dominions. He was received by Adrian with all the honours and respect that were due to his sovereign and to his benefactor: he baptized on Easter-day his second son, Pepin, whom he anointed, and crowned, with his younger brother Lewis, the Kings of Lombardy and Aquitaine. To Charles, his eldest son, was not assigned any distinct inheritance, desirous to have him always near his person, to be the divider of his cares, as he was the partaker of his glory.

This

This splendid ceremony attracted to the ancient city of the world an immense concourse of people, who saw, with astonishment, a Prince in the meridian of his life adopt so extraordinary a division of his empire; unable without doubt to penetrate into the system of politics that had made it necessary: but Charles comprehended the advantages that would result from such a resolution; conscious that he should himself be the sole director, he flattered himself that the Italians, pleased with the presence of their King and a brilliant Court, would bury in future allegiance, the remembrance of their late commotions. A. D. 

Upon his return to France, Lewis was established at Orleans, with competent and distinguished ministers to superintend his education, and to direct his government. By these late arrangements, the ancient empire of the Franks would by no means be dismembered: while the two kingdoms which he had assigned to his younger sons, separated by the tremendous boundaries of the Alps, and the more tranquil division of the Loire, he imagined might rather add to, than diminish, the strength of the various territories of the succeeding Kings of France. But so short-sighted is human wisdom, that, to the very means which he had applied for the stability of his plans of aggrandisement, the extinction of his race, as Sovereigns of France, was ultimately owing.

The

A. D. The Duke of Bavaria, whose aversion to Charles was powerfully encouraged by his wife, the daughter of Desiderius, so soon as he departed from Italy, began new intrigues in that country, and prepared within his own dominions to disturb his present tranquillity; but, from the penetrating eye of the French Monarch, it was scarcely probable that such commotions should be concealed. In dread of his threatened power, with the remonstrances of the Pope, the reluctant Tassilon was induced to bend to the will of his rival: he renewed his homage, indignantly returned into his own dominions, glowing with shame and with rage, and determined to embrace the first opportunity that might promise success to his future negotiations.

The short calm that succeeded, flattered the King with a respite from fatigues; a circumstance to which his reign had hitherto been a stranger. At a Diet which he held in the month of May, while advantageously encamped upon the borders of the Lippe, the Saxon Chiefs renewed their oaths of fidelity; the Ambassadors of Sigefroy, the Danish Monarch, with those of the Sovereign of the Huns, or the Abares, requesting his friendship and alliance, promised a continuation of that desirable repose; but no sooner had he left Germany, than this pleasing delusion vanished. Witikind, upon his departure, returned from Denmark, and endeavoured to impress

prefs upon the minds of the Saxons the humilia- A. D.  
tion to which their adherence to the doctrines of  
the Christian faith had reduced them ; that their  
dependence would be eternal, being the more dis-  
graceful, as it was a reflection upon their lives, and  
an insult upon their consciences. “ Were ye not  
“ free under your own religion but ye must forego  
“ its comforts, and renounce its benefits, to take  
“ up that of the imperious conqueror, by whose  
“ arms you have been so often defeated, and be-  
“ neath the pressure of whose arbitrary injunctions  
“ ye are now disposed to bend? No: if we can-  
“ not overwhelm him with power, let us have  
“ the merit at least of exerting our well-known  
“ valour, and bravely defend that liberty which  
“ is sanctified by the blood of our ancestors.”

Animated by the effusions of their chief, the Saxons gathered together a promiscuous force, alledging, as their motive for assembling, that they meant to repel an inroad of the Sclavonians: but this flimsy disguise was too easily seen through by their vigilant opponent. Thierry, his favoured relation, was dispatched with a powerful army to the banks of the Weser: the generals united in the command, anxious to perform some event of consequence before his arrival,—without his aid, and in opposition to his concurrence and advice, attacked the enemy, encamped upon the declivity of Mount Sontal, and sustained, in consequence of their imprudence, so signal a defeat,

A. D. 782. feat, that very few escaped to join their commander on the opposite borders of the river.

Unaccustomed to discomfiture, and assembling a numerous force, the Sovereign of the Franks outwent his former celerity, and with a rapidity scarcely credible, breathing revenge, penetrated into Saxony. His name alone dispersed the victorious army: the Saxons advanced at his approach to meet him, and endeavoured to appease his wrath by a promise of returning to their allegiance, but which was not to be softened, excepting by a surrender of their chief, who, they informed him, had again retired to his asylum in Denmark. "If Witikind be fled," replied the vindictive conqueror, "his accomplices are here"—and surrounding the defenceless multitude, he ordered four thousand five hundred, who had been engaged in the battle of Sontal, to be conveyed to the little river Alte near the Weser, there to expiate with their lives the disgrace of his arms; an act of such wanton barbarity, as will for ever leave a stigma upon his name and character! How difficult is it to reconcile the inhumanity with which he ever persecuted this unfortunate nation, to his general habits of domestic life! Delighting in the society of the learned, and living in confidence and friendship with Alcuin, a prelate distinguished for his moderation and piety, and addicted as he himself was to literature, the natural soother of vindictive propensities,  
and




and the inspirer of meekness and forgiveness? A <sup>A. D.</sup> generous enemy would be proud to reward the struggles of virtue, and should chastise with caution those who, vindicating the rights of man, assert the inherent freedom of the soul.

This remorseless and unexampled severity effected not that cessation of warfare it was intended to procure; and the two following years the persevering Saxons, more justly exasperated, and led by their popular chiefs Witikind and Albion, allowed not the French Monarch a moment's respite from the fatigues of the field. His sons, whom he early initiated into these scenes of carnage, followed his footsteps, and drenched in blood the plains of Saxony. Fortunately arrested in his desolating course by some commotions in Thuringia, he was obliged to turn his attention to that quarter: for, had he pursued the meditated destruction his resentment had inspired, he might have soon found himself a sovereign of Germany, without leaving in that depopulated country a victim for his sword.

Disgusted at length with scenes of horror, apprehensive of some domestic conspiracy, or assailed perhaps by compunction for the multitudes he had destroyed, he reversed his former plans, and endeavoured to conciliate their good-will through the avenues of peace. He sent some of the most distinguished of the Saxon prisoners to prevail upon Witikind and Albion to repair to his court, that they might from himself be con-

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vinced

A. D.  vinced of his pacific intentions, and save from destruction the remains of their persecuted nation. They ventured, upon receiving proper pledges for their safety, to repair to Attigné upon the Aine, where they were treated with confidence and favour. He commended their patriotism so eminently displayed in the service of their country, and demonstrated, in the most emphatical terms, how essentially necessary it was to their interest to accept of his proffered peace and protection. Overcome by his exhortations, and impressed with the truths he delivered, they suffered themselves to be converted to Christianity: having been baptized, they returned into their country, zealously assisted the progress of the Gospel, and preserved for a considerable time the Saxons in a steady obedience to his government.

Released at length from this destructive war, he obliged the Bretons to satisfy the tribute, which they had neglected to pay; and he overawed to submission and tranquillity the Duke of Bavaria, whom he found still intriguing against him.

Having passed into Italy, he spent his Christmas in the city of Florence, the walls of which he ordered to be rebuilt, and from thence repaired to Rome. Received by the populace of that country as their father and protector, he was deafened by their acclamations: but very different was the impression his visit made upon the Pope, and

and upon the Nobility; the former conceived his A. D. spiritual dignity abased, as the latter felt their <sup>787.</sup> consequence eclipsed, by the presence of their Sovereign. They feared the penetrating eye of Charles might see through those secret plans, not yet ripe for execution, that had been forming against him by Adalgisus, the son of Desiderius, supported by the Empress Irene, by Aregisus the Duke of Beneventum, and by Tassilon the Duke of Bavaria.

Fully informed of all these proceedings, he contented himself with the submission of the Duke of Beneventum: receiving his sons as hostages, he returned to him the eldest; but the youngest, Grimoalde, he retained, treated him with affectionate kindness, and bestowed upon him an education worthy of his rank in life.

The generosity of this conduct makes it apparent that, however political severity might influence his public conduct, and whatever cruel propensities his heart too frequently encouraged, yet, when his natural reason was allowed to operate, he could exhibit a disposition by no means inimical to the softer impressions, but open to the language of sentiment and mercy.

Having passed the mountains, he turned his forces against the Duke of Bavaria: three formidable armies prepared to surround the dominions of this restless prince. Encompassed by dangers he found himself unable to oppose, he was once more constrained to sue for peace, and

**A. D.** to submit to the humiliating terms imposed by the conqueror: but his wounded pride induced him again to renew his intrigues, and which at length confirmed his ruin. Having prevailed upon Adalgifus, and the Court of Constantinople, to disturb the tranquillity of the empire on the Italian side; upon the Huns, and other barbarous nations, situated upon the borders of the Drave and Danube, to penetrate into Germany: the better to co-operate with these respective powers, he was himself to pour his forces into France. Misfortunes too frequently awaken treachery:—his confidential servants abused their trust, and made a full disclosure of all his secret plans to the Gallic Monarch. Tassilon, without a suspicion of the danger awaiting him, repaired to the ensuing Diet at Ingelheim, dissembling, by this external pledge of duty, his secret views; but his confidence in safety was exchanged for despair, when with his sons he was seized, arraigned, and doomed to death, although a sovereign Prince, and equally, if not more legally entitled to the dominions he possessed, than was the implacable Charles. It has been recorded as an instance of his moderation, that he softened the rigour of their sentence, and suffered them to languish out their future days in unavailing regret and mortification in the monastery of St. Goer, near Rhinesfield. Policy is no excuse for injustice; and the punishment of a whole family for the guilt, if such it could be allowed, of an individual,

individual, is equally militant against honour and humanity. By this event, unjustifiable as it may have been, the already extensive dominions of France were enlarged by the valuable acquisition of the Dukedom of Bavaria. A. D. 788.

Severe as was the fate of the unfortunate Tasilon, it deterred not the confederacy he had awakened from arousing itself to action. The Barbarian tribes, faithful to their engagements, poured into Germany their desultory strength: in two irruptions they were defeated, with a most cruel carnage; and in a third attempt, in which they invaded the territories of the Bavarians, they were repulsed, and so dreadfully slaughtered, that few returned to relate to their countrymen the tale of their misfortunes.

This year, marked as it was by success, and splendid from an accession of territory, added another wreath to that crown of glory by which the temples of Charles were encircled. Adalgisus, with a Greek army and a naval force, invaded the territories of Pepin: the Duke of Beneventum, and his eldest son, sunk into the grave at the period when, forgetful of former favours, they were preparing to unite with the enemies of the King of France: and here he gave an example of justice, by surrendering to Grimoalde the domains of his father; and of magnanimity, by intrusting to his zeal the van of the French army. The measure justified his penetration: the enemy were totally defeated, the



A. D. Greek General was slain; and by this event the hopes of the son of Desiderius, who effected his escape, were for ever annihilated.

The welcome news of this victory was the forerunner of a short period of tranquillity: with a heart fatiated with conquest, and panting for the blessings, as the leifures of peace, his active mind was still bent upon employment. To a life of commotion succeeded the more useful cares of domestic order, and political arrangement. The hero was forgotten in the legislator; and the value of time was appreciated by its application to studies of importance, and works of utility. The remembrance of carnage was obliterated by the progress of science; and the duties of the cabinet superseded the conflicts of the field. He endeavoured, by wholesome laws, by mild yet restrictive regulations, to prove that, in a sedulous and faithful attention to the safety and honour of his people, he wished to make atonement for his former prodigality of blood. Let us therefore dwell, with complacency, upon a period of history so honourable to himself, and so beneficial to the welfare and happiness of his people. Under these reflexions, we may be allowed to forget the late destroyer of the species, and acknowledge that here, and here only, Charles becomes an object of importance to the history of Europe, an example worthy of the imitation of Princes, and stands forward as a man deserving the respect and admiration of posterity.

Upon

Upon the foundation of civil polity he erected <sup>A. D.</sup> for himself that unshaken fabric of political glory, that ages to come will look back to with reverence. Perceiving the necessity of forming an efficient government in those provinces which he had subdued; so soon as he became a conqueror, he regulated their constitution; and, by adhering as much as possible to their ancient establishments, secured his acquisitions, and conciliated the good opinion of the people. He comprehended with an eye of intuition, the errors that had given rise to the misfortunes of preceding reigns: to remedy their defects, he gave spirit to his laws, and energy to his decrees, by being the judge, and, from the activity of his body, the executor of his own dispensations. The road to favour was through the laborious paths of industry; remuneration was sure to follow those who directed their pursuits to the public service: situation, however exalted, was no plea for idleness; for the most elevated, as the most humble, were equally amenable to the decrees of justice; properly judging, that upon the personal safety, and real comfort of the community at large, must ultimately depend the security and prosperity of the throne.

He carefully revised the existing statutes; new-modelled some, reformed others, avoiding, where he could, innovations; aware how much the general mass of people, in all countries, are

A. D. 789. attached to local manners, and to domestic customs, and with what reluctance, in every situation, they sacrifice in age, those habits which they had been taught to venerate in youth. With a delicate and discriminating hand he gently removed the shoots that might check the growth of the parent tree: to pluck them with violence, would endanger the productive stem; whereas a gradual culture might give stability to the branches, and in proper time produce the desired fruit.

The versatility of his genius, the vigour of his mind, the extent of his faculties, were equally conspicuous in his useful, splendid, and sublime undertakings. The public roads were repaired, enlarged, and multiplied; aqueducts and bridges were constructed for the benefit of cities, and the accommodation of travellers; and rivers were made navigable, for the ease of transportation, and for the benefit of commerce.

In the moderate seasons of the year he was employed in the field; in the gloom of the winter months, and in the early part of the spring, he held his general assemblies, and presided over the whole legislative body of the State: it was at these meetings that he propounded such laws and regulations as he conceived necessary to establish order, and cement government; allowing the liberty of speech to all, and suffering every individual to oppose his sentiments, and

to recommend his own institutions. Of these instructive avocations, pleasing as they are, we must for a while forego the enumeration, and accompany the active warrior to the field.

A. D.

791.

The Slaves, or the Slavonians, inhabiting the coasts of the Baltic and the borders of the Vistula, began to disturb the late tranquillity of his dominions. The Wilfes, a distinguished tribe of those people, who were more immediately situated in the vicinage of Saxony, were the first who felt the weight of his resentment. Having constructed, with singular dispatch, a bridge across the Elbe, he carried his devastations into the heart of their possessions, and obliged them by the celerity of his motions, and the vigour of his discipline, to submit to his power and government. The Huns now poured into, and threatened destruction to, Bavaria: he turned his arms to oppose their incursions, repelled them with slaughter, and penetrated as far as Raab upon the Danube; but, reluctantly compelled by an epidemic disorder, that broke out among his cavalry, he returned into his own dominions.

As a conqueror, the operations of war, and the bloody conflicts of victory, made but a faint impression upon the mechanical reflections of Charles; but, as a man, he was subject to the common feelings of humanity: and his mind was assailed, at this period, by a chagrin more afflictive and unexpected than any he had hitherto experienced.

A. D. 792. experienced.—While repositing, in the winter season, in the city of Ratisbon, he was disturbed, in the awful silence of the night, by a Lombard Monk, who insisted upon an immediate introduction; which having obtained, he disclosed to him a traitorous design of his natural son Pepin, surnamed the Hump-back, not only against his crown and life, but against that of Fastrade the Queen, and his three legitimate sons. Upon this unwelcome recital, the Prince was immediately ordered to be arrested, with the chief conspirators: their guilt having been unequivocally proved, his accomplices were condemned to suffer death; while himself, the principal delinquent, atoned for his intended parricide by the severities of a cloister, and by the bitterness of his future reflections.

In the next year the Duke of Beneventum, regardless of his former obligations to his benefactor, excited a tumult in the dominions of the King of Italy; but the timely assistance of Lewis, his brother, checked the spirit of revolt, and again restored tranquillity to his dominions.

The Abares, so lately humbled, again more formidable than ever, endeavoured by desperate resolution to recover their late losses, and to preserve the independency they yet possessed. Aware of their spirit and their strength, Charles, to oppose their future incursions, projected the stupendous plan of uniting the Danube with the Rhine; a  
measure



measure which would have given him a more easy entrance into their country, besides the advantages that would naturally accrue to the internal commerce of his dominions: from this splendid idea his attention was diverted, by a general revolt of the Saxons, who defeated and destroyed an army commanded by Thierri, his favourite general, then preparing to join him, in his operations against the Huns. This disgrace was bitterly enhanced by the success of the Moors of Spain, the most powerful and enlightened people of the age, who had driven out his officers, and penetrated into Languedoc; but to the zeal and conduct of his sons, he left the security of that part of his dominions, and determined himself to chastise the revolt and incursions of the Saxons and Abares.

Before the intended expedition, he convened a general Council of the Italian, French, and German Clergy; they, with two of the Legates of the Pope, assembled at Frankfort, to oppose the doctrines of Felix and Eliphantus, two Spanish Bishops, who had advanced that "Jesus Christ was the son of God only by adoption." Conformably to the opinion of the Gallic Monarch, they condemned the heresy; and he notified to the church of Spain, that "what he had determined they must believe."—At the same period he caused the Carolin books to be composed in opposition to the acts of the second Council of Nice,

A. D.  
794.

A. D. Nice, which Adrian the First had transmitted to him, and which he considered as impious, from an expression therein contained, respecting the “adoration of images;” moreover, insisting that the Pope should excommunicate Irene, and her son, the Emperor of the East, that princess having restored the worship of images. The Holy Father however artfully appeased the zeal of Charles.

The convention thus terminated, he sent Henry Duke of Friuli, and his son Pepin, against the Huns, who almost extirpated that valiant nation. Their country was given up to the sword; and Ringa, the capital, was destroyed, with all their towns from Raab to the Drave: in one decisive engagement sixty thousand men, with Vitzan their King, and the principal Nobility, were left upon the field of battle. This beautiful province was completely desolated; the unfortunate inhabitants, scattered and dismayed, sought a refuge beyond the Teisse: these cruel ravages were rewarded with the immense and accumulated spoils, the tokens of many victories formerly obtained over the Roman arms, in the better days of their good fortune and independency. One Canton alone submitted, with Theodad, their chief; and, from this fatal period, they were no more distinguished as a nation.

The humiliation of the Saxons, in concert with Charles his eldest son, he determined to effect:—in vain had he endeavoured to civilize them: he  
had

had transplanted French families into Germany, A. D. and priests to instruct them in the doctrines of Christianity: they drove out the missionaries; and he had the mortification to find that, in all their conventions, they considered them only binding so long as they had not the ability to infringe them: nor can we be surprized at the inveterate hatred they entertained against his person and government, when we reflect upon his inhuman massacres, the peculiar severity of the code of laws purposely framed for the Saxons, and which were so different from those that had been conceded to his other subjects. These circumstances, duly weighed, will rather excite our admiration at the persevering and consistent struggles they made for their independency, and lead us to lament, with the pang of sensibility, that these generous efforts were so effectually, and so cruelly repressed; for by one indiscriminate slaughter the resisting and the unresisting were equally cut off, by the vengeance of his powerful and unrelenting arm.

To propagate a religion by blood, and to exterminate one half of the inhabitants of a country to make the other proselytes, is one of those frenzies of the human mind which cannot be reconciled to necessity or reason: the sanguinary records of Barbaric history should open the eyes of educated man to blast an opinion so destructive and sacrilegious. Reformations, to be  
salutary,

A. D. salutary, should be effected by persuasion, not by force, as conviction but seldom follows constraint. The primitive professors of the Gospel, only breathe the spirit of peace, of meekness, and of pardon; and adverting to this doctrine, in what light can we view the conduct of Charles, but as an execrable destroyer of the human species? Germany, to this hour, has reason to curse the rigours of his conquests, which depopulated so large a portion of Europe. How difficult, how painful is it, to associate the legislator, enacting mild and beneficial laws in the peaceful assemblies of his people, with the disturber of the public tranquillity, the usurper of the rights of others, and the barbarous executioner of his fellow-creatures! Yet these contradictions existed in his person, melancholy and disgusting as it is for us to be obliged to record them!

Allured by the beauty of its situation, and the salubrious quality of its baths, in which he much delighted, he now fixed upon Aquis Granensis, or Aix in the Duchy of Juliers, as the spot upon which he intended in future to reside, and which he meant to establish the seat of his empire: his hours of leisure were amused by adorning his new city with large and magnificent buildings, and by rendering it every way equal to the accommodation of a powerful and a brilliant Court.

The death of Adrian, who was succeeded in the Papal Chair by Leo the Third, was severely and affectionately

affectionately felt by the French Monarch; and A. D. he expressed his concern, in a copy of Latin verses composed expressly for the occasion. The new Pontiff highly gratified his vanity, by conveying to him the notice of his elevation, accompanied by the standard of Rome, and the keys of Saint Peter, requesting that he would accept of the allegiance of the Roman people, as Patrician and Protector of the Holy See.

This splendid embassy, satisfactory as it was, met with alloy from the piracies of the Normans, upon his maritime provinces, and were considerably aggravated by unexpected commotions in Italy.

The nephews of the late Pope, conspiring against Leo, had incited the Romans to insult the person of the Holy Father, who with difficulty escaped the fury of his assailants, and sought for protection and redress at the feet of the Gallic Monarch, then at Paderborn: the humble suppliant was received with the respect due to his sacred office; was sent back to Rome with a numerous and a respectable escort, and with the solemn assurance of a speedy and effectual retribution. Having provided, in the best manner that prudence could indicate, for the security of his coasts, he held a general Diet at Mentz, and then passed the mountains, to assure the insulted Pontiff of the sincerity of his promised engagements.

About



A. D.<sup>1</sup>  
 800. About the close of the autumn he arrived at Rome: after several days of private conference with Leo, in which, to judge from political causes, their respective interests were calmly balanced, and the plan of negociation adopted, which was to be afterwards pursued, a general assembly of Bishops and Nobles was convoked: the accusations against the Pope were adduced; but they refused to sit in judgment against one "who," they alledged, "was not amenable to a mortal tribunal." His Holiness then arose, and solemnly denied the crimes of which he had been arraigned by the turbulent instigators of the former tumult: his affeuration was deemed a sufficient proof of his innocence; his accusers were condemned to death; but here his clemency arrested the severity of their fate; and, at his intercession, their sentence was commuted into banishment.

Strange as was this scene, it was followed, at the celebration of Christmas-day, by one of a more extraordinary nature. While employed in his devotional duties at the altar of the metropolitan church of St. Peter, the Pope advanced with reverence, and placing the imperial diadem upon his head, the people, with a general burst of applause, cried out, "Long live Charles the Great, the pious Emperor of the Romans!" From hence he was led to a magnificent throne, provided for the occasion: when upon this seat of pre-eminence, Leo invested him with the  
 mantle


mantle, and paid him those honours which had A. D.  
 been received by the Roman Emperors from his 800.  
 predecessors. After this august ceremony, he  
 returned to his palace, amidst the shouts of the  
 surrounding populace, exchanging his former ap-  
 pellation for the more distinctive one of Charles  
 the Great, or Charlemagne.

## CHAPTER X.

### FROM THE ELEVATION TO THE DEATH OF CHARLEMAGNE.

Congratulatory embassies to Charlemagne—Irene deposed in  
 the Eastern Empire—Succeeded by Nicephorus—Godfrey,  
 King of the Normans, instigates the Saxons to revolt—Peace  
 restored in Saxony—Charlemagne divides his dominions be-  
 tween his sons, Charles, Pepin, and Lewis—Success of  
 Godfrey—Is assassinated—Deaths of Pepin, Rotrude, and  
 Charles—Bernard succeeds his father Pepin in Italy—Asso-  
 ciation of Lewis with Charlemagne in the Imperial dignity—  
 Death of the Emperor—His character.

**H**OWEVER strongly may be represented by  
 his secretary Eginard, the indifference, and even  
 reluctance with which he received these splendid  
 honours, yet it is certain that he would not suffer,  
 upon any occasion, his newly-acquired title to be  
 dispensed with: affecting the dress and the orna-  
 ments


A. D.  ments of the ancient Emperors, he took the Roman eagle for his device, but distinguished from that by two heads as emblematical of the prodigious extent of his various dominions, and which has continued to be the armorial bearing of the empire from that period to the present day.

Should his right to these personal distinctions be examined, it may be deduced from the voluntary consent of the Roman people, who, by this open act of renunciation, withdrew every shadow of allegiance from the Emperors of the East: they had long been unable to afford them protection, and were therefore undoubtedly at liberty to elect one whose power was fully efficient, to support their dignity, and repel the attacks of their surrounding enemies. However instrumental they might have been in the elevation of Charlemagne to the imperial throne, yet it may be easily observed that, by his steady and affectionate attachment to the person of Leo, he rather considered that to him only was due the honour of his exaltation.

The Court of the new Emperor was dignified, upon his return, by the embassy of several nations sent to congratulate him upon his late honours: among the most distinguished, were the Ambassadors from Constantinople and Bagdad; the former deputed by Irene, who, actuated by a desire to preserve her Italian provinces, was anxious to secure his friendship, and offered to  
unite

unite the empires by the proffer of her hand. A. D. 802.  
This criminal and ambitious woman had, some time since, occasioned the death of her son Constantine, by depriving him of sight; and reflecting upon her precarious situation, detested as she was in her own dominions, and aware of the rapid progress of the power of her rival in dignity, she flattered herself that, in his formidable support she should be enabled to preserve her authority: but this artful negotiation hastened her ruin; she was driven from the throne by Nicephorus, her successor to the purple, and soon after found her merited fate in Mytelene, the place of her confinement. The Greek Emperor acknowledged the titles that had been lately conferred upon the Gallic Monarch, and made an amicable settlement of the boundaries of their respective dominions.

The Caliph of the Arabs, Aaron Rachid, whose seat of government had been transferred by his predecessor from Damascus to Bagdad, was a prince as conspicuous in the East as Charlemagne had now become distinguished in the West; but the Arabian nation were considerably advanced before the subjects of the Emperor, not only in the acquirement of knowledge, but had brought the cultivation of the liberal arts to a considerable degree of perfection. With the present of a striking clock, of peculiar and ingenious mechanism, the Eastern Sovereign flat-

A. D.  tered the zeal of the Catholic Monarch by the surrender of the sacred places in Jerusalem, already the resort of innumerable pilgrims.

From the enjoyment of the full extent of human prosperity, he was interrupted by the threatened invasion of Godfrey the King of the Normans, and who had excited the Saxons, once more, to a revolt. Charlemagne, directed by a better policy than he had formerly observed, removed several thousand families of the Northern Saxons into Flanders, Switzerland, and Picardy; transplanted into the fertile domains of Saxony, the Abrodites, who had been ever faithful to his government: he established a severe inquisition for the remainder of those whose restless dispositions had so frequently disturbed his tranquillity, and by laws of uncommon rigour at length effectually humbled the spirit of that valiant people. The Norman chief, respectable for his abilities, and formidable for the strength of his arms, perceiving that active preparations had been made to oppose his attacks, desisted from his intended enterprise, and readily entered into terms of pacification.

These affairs happily concluded, the Emperor summoned a general Diet at Thionville, where, with the concurrence of the assisting members, he divided his dominions between his three sons, reserving to himself a full authority over them in their respective dominions; an example of impolicy



policy derived from Clovis, and to which may A. D.  
perhaps be attributed both the extinction of his <sup>806—8.</sup>  
line, and the instability, and at length the ruin of  
that of the Carlovingian.

Imitating the persevering activity of their father, his sons were continually in the field. The Saracens in Catalonia, over whom he was in general successful, gave full employment to the arms of Lewis. The restless disposition of the Italians, with the intrigues of the Greeks, and the frequent invasion of the Saracens, excited the vigilance of Pepin; and the Slavonians, Sorabians, and Bohemians, called into action the resistless force of Charles. But in the Normans the Emperor found an enemy not so easily repelled. Godfrey, the valiant leader of a nation of warriors, and highly distinguished for military talents, well apprized of the dangerous encroachment of the arms of his distinguished opponent, was unwilling to see him exert a sovereignty over territories so nearly adjoining to his own: regardless of his recent treaty, he had entered into the dominions of the Abrodites, and spread his devastations as far as the borders of the Elbe. He was repulsed by the Imperial generals, but continued to employ the circumsppection of the Gallic Monarch, during the space of this and the next year, and even threatened to lead his troops to the walls of Aix-la-Chapelle. Equal in conduct as in valour, the wily Norman

A. D.  
809. directed his designs to another quarter; embarked a considerable force in a numerous fleet, and reduced, with a celerity as successful as unexpected, the islands on the coast of Friezland: from thence making a descent upon the Continent, he defeated the armies which were stationed in those provinces, and pursued without molestation the torrent of his victories. Animated by the success of his invasion, he avowed an ambitious desire to meet his opponent, and to determine personally the superiority of their courage and discipline.

To oppose his inroads, Charlemagne found himself obliged to arouse his utmost activity: advancing with his army to the confluence of the Alse and the Weser, he there awaited the approach of the northern powers; and here, the most signal of his life, his better fortune prevailed, where his prowess might have been ineffectually exerted, to save the empire from a determined leader and a superior force. Godfrey was assassinated in his camp by a domestic conspiracy; his followers hastily re-embarked; and the son of the Norman King, not affecting a life of tumult and contention, was willing to forego the conquests of his father, and to sheath his sword in peace.

To the mind of Charlemagne the fortunate termination of these menaced evils would have proved highly gratifying, had they not been severely

verely allayed by the melancholy experience of A. D. domestic calamities. His first affliction arose <sup>810—12.</sup> from the death of the King of Italy, a prince whom he as highly valued for his abilities, as he had been dear to his heart by his dutiful obedience to his government, and the warm and affectionate attention he had ever shewn his person and interest. Pepin had for some years been employed against the Saracens and the Venetians : a defeat which he sustained from the arms of the latter, was supposed to have had a depressing effect upon his mind, and to have hastened his lamented end. This melancholy privation was soon followed by that of his favourite daughter, Rotrude, whom he is represented to have bewailed with an energy of grief inconsistent with the dignity of his character. Let not the cold breast of apathy presume to prescribe bounds to the feelings of a parent ; but first learn sensibility, before it dare arraign those tender sentiments which are interwoven with our natures, and which draw the line between man and the animals of the brute creation : from instinct the latter mourn, but reason sanctifies the sorrows of the first.

The loss of Charles, his eldest son, who for the space of twenty years had been the companion of his victories and the consolation of his cares, completed the measure of his domestic affliction ; yet the natural vigour of his mind was not wholly subdued by the poignancy of the assault.

A. D. Sacred be the private sorrows of the parent ; but can the reflective reader forbear casting back an eye upon the myriads slaughtered by the unrelenting rigour of his arms, susceptible as he himself was of human affliction ! Should he not have considered that he was as an individual in the general mass of sufferers, and that, where one domestic pang might be brought home to his own heart, his sanguinary resentment had been the cause of parental misery perhaps to thousands ?

The King of Italy had left six children, Barnard and five daughters. The former, an infant and illegitimate, was yet appointed by the Emperor the successor of his father ; he was committed to the care of Walla, a favoured relation, and who accompanied him to Milan, to protect his territories from the depredations of the Saracens, the Greeks, and Grimoalde, the Duke of Beneventum : this he effected ; the two former withdrew, and the latter gladly purchased peace by the payment of a considerable annual tribute.

From the multiplicity of business, the recent calamities and the long continued fatigues which had marked his active life, the constitution of Charlemagne, notwithstanding its natural vigour, began visibly to decline ; the infirmities of age also impressed upon his mind the futility of empire, and the short duration of human life. Unable to move in that busy sphere in which he







CHARLE MAGNE

associates his Son Lewis with himself  
in the Imperial Dignity.

*Nichols del.*

*Published by J. S. Jordan N<sup>o</sup> 166 Fleet Street.*


*Hawkins sculp.*

he had occupied so distinguished a place, his unbroken spirit still illuminated the more tranquil consultations of the palace. Ambitious that his rising and meridian sun should retain a splendor, even in its setting rays, his provident attention was directed to the preservation of those signal advantages which the superiority of his genius had acquired. He secured his maritime provinces against the depredations of the Normans; concluded the negociations for peace begun in the preceeding year with that people, and renewed with Michael the alliance formed with his predecessor Nicephorus, in the East.

A. D.

812.

Sensible of his declining strength, he was desirous to secure to his only surviving son that empire which he had, with a life of toil and difficulty, so gloriously established. He sent for Lewis from Aquitaine, and, with the unanimous consent of the Prelates and Nobles, associated him with himself in the Imperial dignity. The ceremony was performed, with unusual solemnity and magnificence, in the chapel which he had before erected, and from which structure his favourite city has obtained the name of Aix-la-Chapelle. Having placed the diadem upon the altar, he strenuously, and with pathetic energy, exhorted him to consider the nature and the magnitude of the charge with which he was about to be invested; to remember, that although his

A. D. his temples were encircled with the diadem,  he was still a mere mortal, equally exposed to the same passions, and liable to the same weaknesses as the most humble of his subjects. He conjured him to prove himself the zealous defender of the church, to be equitable and consistent in the administration of justice, the protector of his family, and the father of his people. After enumerating the various duties that he owed to his station, he asked him in a manly, and in a decisive tone of voice, "if he would pledge himself to govern according to the maxims he had just laid down?" Lewis replied, "that it should be the pride and the glory of his reign to obey all his injunctions, and reverence the memory of such a parent." He then commanded him to take the crown, and to place it upon his head, thereby intimating that he held it independently of any earthly power, foreseeing probably that encroaching authority so shortly afterwards assumed by the successors of St. Peter in the Pontifical Chair.

From this period until the close of his life, if we except a trifling disturbance from the Moors in his Italian dominions, his mind was only occupied in the promotion of his domestic and ecclesiastical establishments, with the tranquil amusement of encouraging the sciences, and adorning his palace; when, in the month of January, as he was leaving the bath, he was seized with a fever, and, neglect-  
ing



ing the first attack of his disorder, it turned to a pleurisy that baffled the skill of his physicians. He knew his danger; and the last hours of his life were spent in preparation, to meet with resignation and fortitude his approaching end. On the twenty-eighth day of the same month he was conscious of his immediate dissolution; his spirits became more and more faint, and his struggles were accompanied by a low and impressive sigh, that breathed out the following pious ejaculation, "Into thine hands, O Lord, I commit my spirit." And thus, in the short period of eight days illness, the illustrious Charlemagne closed his mortal career, in the seventy-first year of his age, the forty-seventh of his reign, and the fourteenth from his accession to the imperial crown. He was interred in the church of Aix-la-Chapelle: a triumphant arch was erected over his remains; and a short epitaph intimated that "Here lie the mortal remains of the immortal Charlemagne."

He had five legitimate wives: the first was a French lady, to whom his father had united him, and whom he repudiated, to take Desiderata, the daughter of Desiderius; Hildegarde, the daughter of the Duke of Suabia, was the third; Fastrade, the daughter of Raoul, was the fourth; and Luitgarde, the fifth. The two first, and the fourth, did not leave any issue; the latter had two daughters, Theodevade, and Hiltrude. By Hildegarde he had four sons, and five daughters; Charles, Pepin, Lewis, and Lothaire; the last of whom died

A. D.

814.

A. D. died young; Charles and Pepin, in the vigour of their life; and Lewis survived to enjoy the inheritance of his father. The daughters were Rotrude, Bertha, Gefilie, Hildegarde, and Adelaide, for the first of whom he is supposed to have felt a warmth of attachment not consistent with the purity of parental affection. Besides these, he had several natural children, who afterwards filled with commotion, by their intrigues and jealousies, the dominions of France.

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Of a life so distinguished, and of a reign so brilliant, it will be difficult to give such a character as may not be deemed to border too much on panegyric; but if the vices of Charlemagne shall be opposed to his virtues, we shall hazard the censure of depicting a monster, when we would wish to pourtray the character of a man. Applause may be thought venal, and severity be considered as unjust. To form an adequate criterion of his private conduct, and his public actions, it will be necessary to analyse them both; to commend, where commendation will not be hyperbolous; and to arraign, where an inquisition will not be invidious.

We have hitherto been contented to pass lightly over the conflicts of the field, and the deliberations of the cabinet, in which renown attended his arms, and success his negotiations, without interrupting the sequence of the narrative,




tive, or dwelling too minutely upon the transactions of a Monarch to whom the enthusiast has been taught to look up with rapture, the hero with the anxiety of example, and the politician with veneration—to a life distinguished by inconsistencies the most extraordinary, qualities the most splendid, and atrocities the most inhuman. A. D.

The uncommon size of his stature, the vigour of his body, the grace and majesty of his person, with the dignified composure of his countenance, were advantages of an exterior nature too considerable to be passed over without a comment; and as appearances often attract the eye, before experience can convince the judgment, it is not to be marvelled at, if his subjects were filled with reverence, his enemies with dread, and that those whose situations drew them yet nearer to the sphere of his attraction, were impressed with attachment, or filled with awe.

His patience under fatigue, his perseverance in difficulties, and his fortitude in danger, were circumstances of a public nature; but, in the private functions of life, his habit, like his manners, was simple and unaffected: his table was distinguished by abundance without profusion, and by frugality without meanness; in the enjoyment of which he was moderate, and temperate to imitation: yet upon great and solemn occasions he could indulge in every profusion that could dazzle, by the splendid magnificence of his appearance.

The

A. D.  The example of his father, the brightness of whose intrinsic worth he never attained, undoubtedly excited in his breast the sparks of competition, and the ambition of surpassing, where to have equalled would have been sufficient praise. Extensive as was his empire, the basis had been formed by the exalted genius of a Pepin; and happy would it have been for the uncivilized inhabitants of the Germanic forests, had the son, like his progenitor, been actuated, in his politics, by the moderate and liberal views of his predecessor. When the possession of superior abilities which should dignify the prince, and bless mankind, are directed from the paths of humanity and virtue into those of rapine and bloodshed; accustomed as we are to turn with disgust from a Tamerlane and a Ghengis Kan, the appellation of conqueror will excite no other sentiments than those of horror and indignation.

The death of Carloman was one of those singular instances of good fortune that so peculiarly marked his life; in him he would have experienced an inveterate, and probably a formidable competitor: his removal from the scene of warfare afforded ample space to that independency of action, without which his power could never have been extended to the mighty heights it ultimately attained. The secession of his brother in the invasion of Aquitaine, and his consequent success in his own person, furnished him with an  
early

early and an useful reflection, that a man who A. D.  
depends solely upon his own exertions, constructs  
a foundation for the advancement of his most ar-  
dent pursuits, not easily to be baffled by the in-  
tervention of jealousy, the division of power, or  
the insinuations of interest.

Thus his first success in arms fortified his dependence upon his own resources; his rapid conquest of Italy opened the way to the summit of his earthly exaltation:—but how shall we excuse that thirst of dominion which led him to the unjustifiable attempt? His wars in Germany demonstrate what perseverance and regular discipline may effect against the efforts of the most desperate valour. Had the propagation of the Gospel been mildly recommended, it is natural to suppose that his zeal would have been attended with a better success: he would then have been spared the reproach of inculcating a religion of peace by the vengeance of the sword; of having sealed conversion with blood; and of having depopulated, in a period of thirty years, the territories of a brave and an independent people. His wanton destruction of their places of worship, his assassination of their priests upon the very altars of their gods, and with, sometimes, the extermination of the inhabitants of whole districts, to satisfy his resentment, bespeak the intolerance of his faith, and the unjustifiable violation of that of others; but upon this his fanatic spirit  
allowed

A. D. allowed him not to reflect: to be a Pagan was in his eyes a crime sufficient to merit the extremes of his most rigorous persecution.

In the ambition and talents of Godfrey, the Sovereign of a people descended from the persecuted Saxons, their cruel despoiler might have found a leader willing to retaliate upon him the woes inflicted upon their unfortunate nation; and who might have impeded, had he not been removed by the hand of the assassin, that continued flow of success which pursued him, if we except the intervention of domestic calamities, the natural consequences of his protracted years, unclouded, to the ultimate period of his days. From the enthusiastic bigot, and the merciless conqueror, we turn, fatigued and disgusted; but the great, the enlightened legislator we accompany with an inverse proportion of satisfaction and delight.

To record the political and civil institutions of Charlemagne, is but a justice due to his memory: his comprehensive and imparting mind diffused a ray of illumination which the barren speculation of the times could scarcely lead us to suppose that they were capable of receiving: the genial streams of instruction were diverted into every corner of the empire, and the most distant parts were fertilized by its expanding influence. His ardent thirst of knowledge, his liberal encouragement of learning and the  
arts,



arts, the deep reflections of his mind which could <sup>A. D.</sup> foresee and overcome all impediments, calls aloud for our admiration; and if we do not more clearly investigate the resources which he could, when occasion required, so ably call forth, it must proceed from our inability, rather than from a desire to withdraw that tribute, so eminently the price of his transcendent genius.

Neither the tumult of the camp, the dangers of the field, nor the cares of government, were suffered to interfere with those hours appropriated to reading and reflection: from the extent of his natural capacity, with the most unremitting perseverance, he overcame those disadvantages, the result of a confined education, to which, at his accession to the throne, he was liable, not having so far advanced in literature as to have been able even to sign his name. This acquisition of letters he considerably improved by his repeated journeys to Italy, where, conversing frequently with the best-informed, and treasuring up whatever was worthy of his remembrance, he acquired sufficient knowledge to value the possession, as to make him equally covet an accumulation. He was acquainted with the Greek, and familiarly with the Latin languages, and wrote verses in the last. Competent to most sciences, he more particularly delighted in the study of astronomy. His liberality and condescension drew to his Court, those whose talents and erudition were the  
O ornaments



A. D. ornaments of other countries ; he retained them about his person, desirous to obtain instruction from whatever source it could be derived, whether in legislation, policy, or arms ; sedulously employing his hours of leisure in the study of those authors whose genius or judgment could strengthen his mental talents, and improve him in the valuable practice of reflection.

Flaccus Albinus, or Alcuin, a native of Britain, and professor of theology at York, one of the most moral and learned men of his age, was invited to Aix-la-Chapelle ; he became his principal companion and most confidential friend : he was placed at the head of the literary foundation established in his palace, where the principal members were each distinguished by the name of his favourite author ; Charlemagne assuming that of David.

In the cathedra and principal abbeys of his empire, seminaries were established for reading, writing, arithmetic, and church music : the latter he thought essential, supposing, from the pleasing and tender effect it has upon the mind of the enthusiast, that it might inspire the auditory with additional devotion.

To the subordinate duties of his station he was equally attentive. Studious to promote the comforts of the lower orders of the people, he was indulgent, and softened their labours by his liberality ; he was generous to the clergy, a kind master, and a tenderly affectionate father.

In

In short, whether we consider the vigour of his <sup>A. D.</sup> mind, the depth of his capacity, the fertility of his genius, his talents for government, his formation of laws, or his stupendous ideas, he stands presented to the imagination, as one of the most splendid and distinguished characters that this or any age, or any country, has ever produced; and possessed such a concentration of abilities as it will be difficult to discover in any subsequent period of history, let the example be taken from either public or private life.

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## C H A P T E R    X I.

Establishment of the Franks—Their Kings—Their power—Succession—And revenues—Orders in the State—Condition of the conquered people—General Assemblies—Courts of Justice—Laws—Taxes—Mayors—Benefices—Jurisdiction of the Lords—Military—Church—Commerce—Arts—Coin—Manners.

A SLIGHT sketch of the most striking features in the manners and customs of the Franks having been already given in a former part of this work; it may be necessary, at the close of a life so distinguished, and of a reign so brilliant as that of Charlemagne, to take notice of such alterations as may have been introduced from the

A. D. end of the fifth, to the commencement of the ninth century.

Permanently established in their extensive conquests, they did not find it necessary to adopt the measures of the Visigoths and Burgundians in their settlements in Gaul, who had entered into a composition with their new subjects in the division of property; but possessing themselves of whatever they found most suitable to their wants, or most compatible with their interest, they relinquished the remains of a promiscuous ravage to the vanquished Gauls, and to the no less insulted Romans.

Led by several valiant chiefs of the same race, whose combined forces amounted not to 30,000 men, the more successful arms of Clovis, at length, triumphed over his rivals in power; and his valour and abilities, although contaminated by the most perfidious acts of personal outrage and domestic treachery, confirmed the obedience of all to his particular government.

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We have already observed how extremely limited was the authority of their early Kings,—their leaders in battle and their chief Magistrates in time of peace: but the Merovingian Princes very early entrenched upon the public liberty; and notwithstanding their encroachments were sometimes opposed, yet they speedily became tyrants in power, as they were already delinquents in principle. The authority they assumed,

fumed, as it was weak, was likewise transitory; A. D.  
and, in the latter reigns of the Sovereigns of this race, was usurped by their more ambitious and potent subjects.

The crown in itself was hereditary, and confined to one family; but, in reverting to the transactions of succeeding times, it may be observed to have partaken of an elective right: the immediate heir was not always raised to the throne; nor was illegitimacy considered as a disqualification to exclude the succession.

When Pepin was acknowledged their sovereign, in preference to the rightful heir, the nation bound themselves not to elevate in future to this exalted situation any prince from another family; preserving, at the same time, the right of excluding such as they should deem unworthy to fill the throne. The will of the reigning Monarch was, however, found to prevail; and at his death he appointed, with a confidence in the concurrence of the people, his intended successor; and there are but few instances in which his nomination met with opposition.

The first form of the early government may be said to have been a Democracy, attempered by the power of the Prince and Nobles; but, before the extinction of the Merovingian line, to have partaken both of Despotism and of Aristocracy.

During a minority, the Queen Mother and a Regency of Nobility directed the helm of State:

A. D. without the consent of the General Assembly, the dangerous prerogative of making war was not entrusted to the Sovereign; he was allowed to negociate, and to confirm a peace; and it had been well, in succeeding ages, if this salutary institution had been more attended to, and that, with the power to spare, he had been divested of the authority to destroy.

The revenues of the Crown consisted of those territories which had been assigned for the support of the regal dignity in the general allotment that was made after the conquest, which were chiefly situated within the vicinity of the great towns, were reserved by the princes in their own hands, and cultivated by the bondsmen for their use: they had likewise some trifling tolls upon the river; a capitation-tax from manumized slaves; fines exacted for particular crimes; the voluntary gifts of the provinces; the *Freda*, which was a third of the fine received by the Judge in a composition: and these, with the taxes upon their bondsmen, and the division of spoil in the time of war, constituted the whole amount of the royal income. The early Princes had, consequently, much to give, and generally left at their decease a considerable treasure to be divided, according to their testamentary dispositions, among their family and friends.

Charlemagne was minutely attentive to his personal revenues: he who could profusely distribute to his adherents the riches of the Lombards,



bards, and the treasures of the Huns, calculated A. D. his own expences with the most careful investigation; and so rigid was his economy, that the most trifling surplus of his farms and gardens was directed to be sold; an attention to objects of a subordinate nature uncommon in most situations of grandeur, but more particularly so in a prince possessed of such an empire, and the master of such extraordinary resources.

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There were three conditions of people, the Nobility, the Freeman, and the Bondsmen. The first were comprehended, at different periods, under the names of Ambacti, or Clientes, Comites, Fideles, Leudes, and Anstrutiones. Of this class was that band of valiant youths, the companions of the chief, who by oath attached themselves to his person and service, distinguished themselves in the day of battle by their emulation in his defence, receiving, as a remuneration for their zeal, from his generosity or gratitude, such gifts as his rude and simple state afforded; and who in short appear to have been bound to nearly the same services as were required from the possessors of fiefs, after the establishment of the feudal government.

Into the first rank it was but seldom that any one was admitted without having made himself conspicuous by peculiar merit, or by some signal act of valour; their privileges, as their distinctions, were merely personal, not hereditary; and

A. D. consisted in such honourable marks of favour as could be conferred by a distinguished place in the general assemblies, the trust of public offices, an admittance into the council, or that supreme court of justice in which the King presided, and by whose authority alone could they be judged: on the other hand, composition exacted for an offence against the law was proportioned to the distinctions they had enjoyed; and to this discriminated rank, in the progress of time, were all orders of men admitted.

The second class consisted of the general mass of freemen, who held lands by allodial tenure, which, having been obtained by lot, were hereditary, and were not subject to taxation, excepting, and by tacit consent, to military aid.


Of Bondsmen there were three descriptive kinds: the Servi, the most numerous, were of the most degraded order, and principally captives. The will and caprice of the proprietor inflicted capital punishment, without an appeal to any tribunal; the torture was used for the most trifling delinquencies; they were not allowed to be joined in wedlock by a priest; and whatever they earned or saved, became the property of their owners. Subsistence and clothes were indeed allowed them; but they were confined to a particular dress, and were indiscriminately offered to purchase.

The Villani were transferrable with the land, but paid a stipulated rent for the advantage it produced;

produced; the residue they were permitted to re-<sup>A. D.</sup>tain, as a compensation for their labour and industry.

The third kind were rather an inferior sort of freemen, possessing a small independent property, and cultivating the domains of the rich at a given rent. They bound themselves to the landholder by the performance of some personal services, and were allowed to carry arms; a privilege of which the two former classes were deprived. With the appearance of a more eligible situation, the individuals of this latter rank were oftentimes so unjustly and so cruelly oppressed, that it was not uncommon for them to renounce their liberty, under the assurance of bodily protection, and daily food: to the obedience of the church, whose yoke was more easy, they submitted with less reluctance than to that of the laity. Besides these classes already enumerated, there were others who were distinguished by the appellation of Oblati, who from superstitious motives resigned their freedom to the service of religion; and these were of three different kinds: such as, freemen of some consideration, who bound themselves to protect a particular church or monastery, in consideration of the protection it afforded them; others, who supported their own weakness by an annual contribution from their property to some ecclesiastical foundation; and again, those who actually and absolutely renounced their liberty, for the mortifications of the flesh.

Servitude,

A. D.  Servitude, under the first race of Kings, very rapidly increased; nor is it to be wondered at, when we reflect upon the perpetual civil wars between the Merovingian Princes, who, ravaging the territories of each other, swept off indiscriminately not only the herds and flocks, but with them the unprotected inhabitants, without distinguishing between the freeman and the slave, whom they alike subjected to the miseries of bondage. Hence it unavoidably followed that large tracts of country, which had been held by the former class of people, were changed into mortmain by those who, being the proprietors of a number of bondsmen, seized upon the depopulated lands, and cultivated them for their own use. The evil, great as it was, continued to increase, until Charlemagne, whose penetrating eye no disorders could escape, saw into the abuses, and prevented the augmentation of service, by the enactment of an express capitulary for the relief of the bondsmen. This indeed proved but a temporary alleviation, and servitude became more general, and more insupportable, during the government of his successors.

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After the rage of rapine had ceased, and the thirst of conquest had been satiated; whatever mortifications the Gauls and the Romans might, as a conquered people, have sustained, they were, nevertheless,

nevertheless, free under the dominion of the Franks; it is evident, from the distinction made by the old writers, and by the Salian code, in which they are denominated *Convives des Rois*, guests of the King, Roman proprietors, and Roman tributaries. Their first terrors having subsided, it is most probable that they enjoyed more real liberty, with a proportionate decree of tranquillity, than when dependent for protection upon a venal Magistrate, a weak and a distant Court, and an inefficient, as a declining empire. A. D.

It is true that the Salic laws made a most humiliating difference between the two nations: the life of an Austrurian was rated at six hundred sols of gold; while that of a Roman of the first rank, although distinguished as the guest of the Sovereign, was estimated at one half of this sum: that of a freeman of the Franks was valued at two hundred; of a Roman proprietor, assessed at a hundred; and thus in all similar cases, in a progressive reduction of one half: but if they chose to embrace the Salian code, they then became entitled to every privilege that their conquerors enjoyed, and were early advanced, under the successors of Clovis, to the possession of the first officers of the State.

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The general Assemblies of the Franks, denominated the Fields of March, from their having been held



A. D. held in that month, and upon some extensive plain, may be traced to the most distant period of their history. In these ancient conventions, to which every freeman had a right to resort, was debated whatever could affect the welfare of the community at large; the Sovereign, by the general approbation, was confirmed in his elevation to the throne; and by the suffrages of the people were all matters of importance finally determined.

These convocations, however respectable, were very soon neglected; inasmuch that, towards the close of the reign of Clotaire the Second, they appear to have been scarcely remembered. Pepin of Heristal had the merit of reviving them; but this restitution was partial: the spirit had evaporated; and whatever authority the national meeting might have possessed in the reign of Clovis, was now centered in a Council of the Prince, the Clergy, and the Nobles. Such indeed was the one convoked by Clotaire the Second, after the fall of Brunehaut; and these assemblies in themselves cannot be supposed to have enjoyed any substantial privileges in a government so fluctuating and so unsettled.

Charles Martel ruled with absolute sway. The Prelates with whom he was in a constant state of warfare, made up, in their own persons, a considerable representation in these national meetings: this, to him, was a sufficient motive not to convene them.

them. His son Pepin treated with more respect the Clergy; and some concessions that he had made to the church induced him to restore the assemblies to the same respectability that his grandfather had done; being conscious that whatever influence that body of men might possess, would be directed to promote his interest, and those views of ambition which began to open in his aspiring mind. A. D.

To Charlemagne was it left to re-establish them in their ancient form. His superior genius comprehended at once the mighty advantages that would result from such a system. His penetration readily conceived that, by a conciliatory admission of the people into the legislative body, the only means would be procured by which substantial order to the government, and willing obedience to the laws, could be restored. He saw with indignation that the lower orders of the people were miserably depressed, as well by the laity as by the clergy: he found the latter scandalous from the corruption of their manners, and anxious to exert their resentment against those Lords whom the bounty of Martel had enriched with their spoils; while they, equally bent upon preserving the possessions they had acquired, thought no means so likely to effect it as the farther humiliation and oppression of the spiritual order: hence every rank of society presented a picture of general anarchy and civil discord. In  
no

A. D. no part of his reign were the extraordinary abilities of this celebrated legislator more evidently conspicuous than in the speedy reformation which his salutary arrangements introduced throughout every part of his extensive empire. So very equally did he balance the different orders of the State, in so just an equilibrium did he preserve the passions of ambition and interest, that he infused, by his steady and vigorous policy, new life into the whole; and was enabled, by the timely intervention of a deep and a judicious speculation, to elevate his country to the very zenith of prosperity and glory.

By his recent form, the National Assemblies were convoked twice in the year; at the commencement of the spring, at which time the militia likewise attended, and at the close of the autumn. To prevent the former meeting from being too numerous, it was not meant, as in the time of Clovis, to consist of every freeman living under the Salic and Ripuarian laws; but each Count, by which was understood the governor of a city, deputed to the Field of May twelve representatives, selected from the class of the Racinbourgs, assistants of the Counts, or from the most respectable people of his district. These, with the Nobility, Bishops, Abbots, or their advocates, composed the first meeting. At this time the operations intended to be adopted in the ensuing year, were determined upon; the new laws

laws were framed and sanctioned; whatever concerned the external or the internal welfare of the kingdom, was debated; it was the supreme tribunal, to which an appeal from the provincial courts might be made for redress; it was vested with the power of distributing employments, of filling seats of judicature, and of judging and compromising all disputes that arose between the Church and the Nobility. A. D.

If the weather permitted, they assembled in the open air, accommodated at the same time with proper chambers for the deliberation of the different Orders. Although not personally present at their debates, Charlemagne was yet the soul of their assemblies, by the means of those to whom he had communicated his views. He was often called upon to adjust those matters wherein his interference was required; and he finally attended, to approve and to sanction such laws as had been newly formed. While they debated, his moments of leisure were employed in receiving the free-will offerings of the provinces, a custom established by ancient usage; in collecting information from the concourse of people drawn together upon this occasion, who were allowed and encouraged to communicate whatever they thought proper; not disdaining to receive information from the most humble of his subjects; conversing with those whom he seldom saw, and equally cheerful and condescending to all around him.


The

**A. D.** The autumnal meeting was of a very different nature, consisting but of few members;—the Sovereign, the most respectable and experienced of the Nobility, with the confidential Ministers of the Crown: and these deliberations were never made public, but were preserved with a most strict and inviolable secrecy. At this period of the year the campaigns being at an end, the gratifications to be distributed to those whose exertions had merited reward were duly canvassed and bestowed: they now consulted upon such affairs as might require an immediate attention, and prepared the subject business for the ensuing deliberations in the spring of the year.

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Besides these general Assemblies, the provincial ones were restored to those original functions which they had enjoyed at the establishment of the government in Gaul. The kingdom had then been divided into provinces, over each of which a Duke was appointed, who superintended all civil as well as military affairs. The cities had their Counts; as the villages their Centenarii, who administered justice in the respective courts of their different departments, and whose titles were merely attached to their present appointments. These offices were bestowed for a year; were generally, at the expiration of that time, renewed: sometimes they were gratuitously conferred, but likewise frequently sold: hence the extortion and injustice that ensued; as men, when  
elevated



elevated to distinction by purchase are apt to assume a right without discrimination of abuse. A. D. 


By the Salic law these officers of justice were to be assisted in their determinations by twelve persons chosen from the *Rachinbourgs*, and from the most respectable citizens, who sat in judgment and decided the cause: the Duke, or the Count, only pronounced the sentence. These regulations, however, had been, in the progress of years, abused, and the Judges had assumed to themselves the sole power of decision.

Charlemagne entrusted not too much power to one man: he no longer gave the command of a province to a Duke, but divided the whole kingdom into four legations, appointing the same number of Royal Envoys, "*Missi Dominici*," who were obliged to visit each division, and hold a court of justice independent of the Counts, every three months, to inspect the proceedings of the administrators of justice in every part of his dominions; to examine the state of the provinces, and to report whatever abuses prevailed in them to the King, and to the national meeting. In his own court he was as much the first judge, as in the field he was the first general, presiding himself, and referring only matters of trifling import to the *Apocrifaire*, who in this domestic court was the judge of ecclesiastical affairs, as the Count of the Palace was the administrator of justice to the laity.

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Personal

A. D.  Personal laws are the distinctive characteristics of such as are established by Barbarians. The Franks, after their conquests, still adhered to their ancient customs, and permitted all those nations dependent upon their dominion, to be governed by their own peculiar institutes, or to be amenable to that code in use which they might choose to prefer. An imperfect collection of that of the Salians was, by Clovis, reduced to writing; as was the Ripuarian by Theodoric, or Thierry, the King of Austrasia; with those of the Bavarian and other tributary tribes of Germany, dependent upon his government.

There were but two crimes deemed capital by the Franks; a traitor was hanged, and a coward was drowned: the modern jurisprudence has no punishment for the latter. Courage is no longer essentially necessary for personal protection, while the laws are open to the redress of personal grievances: shame and contempt are become the only portion of the recreant.

In their original state the Franks disdained to seek redress for injuries to any other appeal than to the courage which resentment stimulated; a whole family would sometimes take up the cause of an individual: time gradually introduced more moderate regulations; and disputes were conducted and terminated under the eye of the magistrate: hence compositions were allowed, and  
money

money became the substitute for blood. Every A. D. offence was minutely weighed and valued, and the fine proportioned to its magnitude; besides which, the aggressor paid the *freda*, a sum equal to a third of the composition, a local right to which the Judge of the district was intitled for his interference. Blows and wounds had their stipulated price; and fifteen sols were deemed a sufficient atonement, if only blood was drawn: but when the parties were not conformable to the rules, the Judge was empowered to bring them before the Sovereign, and to await his decision.

It was deemed oftentimes sufficient that a man swear, and brought others to verify his oath, in confirmation of his innocence; but the frequency of false oaths, and the inefficacy of this method of asseveration, introduced a more extraordinary method of terminating disputes, leaving all to chance; but yet dignified with the appellation of an appeal to the judgment of God. A variety of senseless and cruel innovations were introduced; such as, the judgment of the cross, and the different species of the ordeals. The person accused was obliged to plunge his hand into a cauldron of boiling water, to take up from the bottom the consecrated ring; to handle red-hot iron, or to walk blindfold over a burning ploughshare: the hand was sealed up in a bag; and if, within a few days, it had not any mark of the fiery trial it had undergone, the criminal was acquitted.

A. D. quitted. When the offenders were thrown into cold water previously consecrated by the ministers of religious worship, his sinking to rise no more, was a full confirmation of his innocence; while the unfortunate victim who escaped one doom, was certain of an equal fate by some other mode of death. These barbarous customs were, at length, left to the vulgar; and gave way to the more approved, and better adapted indeed to their martial disposition, the trial by single combat: this mode of redress, the authority of Charlemagne in vain attempted to abolish, and even found it necessary to allow. It became, in the period of a few years, sanctioned by regular rules in every country throughout Europe.

Attached as they were to their ancient customs, the disorders which they produced, yet obliged them to incorporate some of the Roman laws into their own system of jurisprudence. Murder, incest, and robbery, which had been punished by exile, or by composition, were, before the end of the sixth century, requited by the loss of life.

There was a material difference in the construction of the Salic, the Ripuarian, and the Burgundian codes. Gundebald and Sigismund collected the latter; and, by the laws of these two last-mentioned nations, corporal punishment was admitted; in the former it was not tolerated. Those of the Burgundians were impartial to the conquered people, who therefore continued in the practice

practice of the Roman law, there not being any <sup>A. D.</sup> motive of policy or indulgence to induce them to change it; as also did the subjects of the Visigothian Monarchs in Gaul. The Salic required positive proof, except in very few instances, and therefore allowed not of trial by combat. The Ripuarian and the Burgundian, satisfied with negative proofs, permitted it; and Gundebald was the first sovereign who gave sanction to legal duels.

Numerous as were the regulations adopted to restrain a fierce and a barbarous people, by princes themselves equally sanguinary and unjust, they were eventually found to be abortive. Institutions, however excellent they may be in theory, can be but of little use when neglected in the performance. The Merovingian Kings annihilated all order by their precepts; those commendatory letters which empowered the administrators of justice to dispense with the law, in favour of those who had obtained them. Guilty themselves of the most violent enormities, they consigned to death, as resentment or caprice inspired; seized upon the possessions of those who died intestate; took assassins under their immediate protection; invaded the property of the rich; and practised every species of oppression, injury, and insult.

Clotaire the Second corrected the abuse of the precepts; amended, or rather enforced an obedience to the laws; and introduced a wife, although



**A. D.** but a temporary reformation. Dagobert again revised them, and promulgated them in the form they have been handed down to posterity; but his own example was too conspicuously flagitious, to expect any salutary benefit to result from his regulations. Charlemagne provided effectually for the disorders that had unhinged the operations of justice: he restored the ancient laws, enacted new institutions, not less admirable for their wisdom, than for the regularity with which they were executed. The public ordinances, as laid down and digested in his capitularies, the emanations of a vigorous and enlightened mind, it was incumbent upon every person of rank, and expected from every one who held any public office in the State, to be perfectly conversant with. Those which he enacted for the government of the Saxons, impartiality must exclude from general praise: his resentment against that unfortunate people induced him to form for them such as were the most severely rigid; they were even given to understand that they were not to expect mercy, although they sought it in the asylum of the church.

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A people in so humble a state of society as were the Franks at the time of their settlement in Gaul, could not be supposed to have formed any regular mode of taxation. A State without wants, as the judicious Montesquieu observes, had not occasion for imposts. A transient tax of a pitcher of wine for every acre of land, imposed  
by

by Chilperic and Fredegonde, only fell upon the A. D. Gaulish tribes; and the rolls upon which it was recorded, were destroyed by the clergy, who were chiefly of that description. A Judge was constrained to fly to the protection of the Church, for having, in the same reign, imposed a burden upon several of the Franks. The *Census*, or *Tributum*, words which they borrowed from the Roman government, but of a very different application, implied with them no more than an assessment made upon their respective bondsmen, by the King, the Clergy, and the Lords, and alluded likewise to the aid required from the freemen, to lodge and assist the ambassadors and the envoys of the Sovereign, in their different journeys throughout the empire. We may therefore observe that general taxes were by no means understood, and that the monarch was, in a great measure, indebted to the attention which he paid to his personal property, for the extent, as well as the permanency of his revenues.

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The reputation acquired by the arms of the Franks, under the government of the latter Mayors of the Palace, together with the exorbitant power assumed by those officers, make it necessary that we should investigate the origin, as well as the progress and extent of their usurped authority.

In the more distant period of the monarchy, they were only considered as the first domestic

A. D. officers of the household: to this employment was united, in the progress of time, the direction of the finances, and the command of the army, when the indolent successors of Clovis no longer conducted them in person to the field. To these they afterwards added the presidency of that supreme tribunal at which the Prince had been accustomed to preside, wherein were determined the disputes of the Nobility, and to which the provinces had the right to appeal from their own courts:—at length uniting with these powerful offices the patronage of the Crown, they became possessed of the full enjoyment of the whole of the royal prerogatives; thus no longer domestic servants, chosen by the Sovereign, they became the first officers at the head of the nation.

So early as the close of the reign of Clotaire the Second, the Mayor of the Palace had acquired an ascendancy which in the end proved fatal to the family of Clovis. Warnarcarius, the mayor of Burgundy, and the principal conspirator against the unfortunate Brunehaut, as a reward probably for his treachery to one sovereign, and for his services, however interested, towards another, was permitted by the King to retain his office for life. The minority of the sons of Dagobert gave them the opportunity of extending their power; and Floachatus, the mayor of Burgundy, to preserve his elevation, held out to the clergy and the nobles of that kingdom, the seductive

seductive promise of continuing them in the A. D. offices and honours they held, so long as he should enjoy his own. Upon the death of Sigebert the Second, a more daring encroachment upon the royal authority took place in the person of Grimoalde, who presumptuously placed the crown upon the head of his son, in preference to the rights of the presumptive heir.

Pepin of Heristal, a more dangerous character than any of his predecessors, inasmuch as he possessed, with superior virtues and talents, an equal share of ambition, conciliated the good opinion of all ranks and descriptions of people. The Burgundian and the Neustrian Nobility, oppressed and harassed by the tyranny of their Mayors of the Palace, repaired to his standard for protection. His victory over Thierri confirmed the degradation of the King; and the elevation of his grandson to the throne, annihilated a line of princes who had long ceased to govern, and whose dominion, founded in blood, exhibits, in its commencement, a series of the most sanguinary atrocities, as, in its close, a race of sovereigns the most weak to be met with in the annals of any age or country.

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At the commencement of this division, we have observed that the general mass of freemen held their lands by allodial tenure. In opposition to this property, another species was introduced

A. D. duced under the first race, styled *beneficium*, and the possessor denominated a vassal. It was a grant made by the prince, of a portion of his domains, and appears to have been a precarious tenure, its duration depending upon the caprice of the sovereign. It cannot be precisely ascertained either when these grants were introduced, or what were the obligations required for their possession. It is however certain that, under the Merovingian Kings, they were given, and resumed at will; and, if continued, were to be renewable every year. Gontran intimates to Childbert, in their interview of reconciliation, after the treaty of Andely, which confirmed the peace between them, that if he wished to reward his adherents, and to adopt a political principal of government, it would be proper to despoil one who held a considerable benefice, to divide it into separate portions among many.

At the above meeting, the Clergy and the Lords compelled those Sovereigns to engage themselves in the most solemn manner, that they would not resume the grants which they had once conceded; but this forced compliance was only observed so long as they found it not safe to enfringe it. At the same time we find that the wives, the widows, and the daughters of their Kings, were empowered to alienate their lands in perpetuity. Brunehaut, who endeavoured to restore benefices to their original form, excited the indignation of the Nobles



Nobles of Burgundy against her ; and to their re- A. D.  
sentment, rather than to her crimes, may be attri-  
buted her disgraceful fall. ~~~~~

The Assembly convoked at Paris by Clotaire the Second, in six hundred and fifteen, confirmed all the grants that had been made by his predecessors ; nor can it be imagined that he would have submitted to such an infringement of the royal domains, had he not found that, to abolish them would have been a measure too hazardous to attempt.

The benefices of Charles Martel, the term of *fief* not having been applied until a much later period, took a different form. The conquered and the ecclesiastical lands, he bestowed upon his adherents, to be enjoyed during their life, subjecting them to particular duties, both military and domestic ; the possessors of which again divided their portions among their retainers : and it is about this period that some benefices became hereditary, and probably even then not transferable in perpetuity.

The superior privileges of the King's vassals, which will be hereafter more particularly discriminated, induced some allodial possessors, about the commencement of the ninth century, to convert their lands into the new form, by surrendering them to the Sovereign, who repassed them to the donors, by the way of gift ; but it can scarcely be supposed that even this were done, without  
still

A. D. still preserving the liberty of devising it to their representatives.

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That independent spirit of the Franks which could, with difficulty, be induced to submit to the controul of a magistrate, appears to have given use to the territorial jurisdictions of the Seniores, or Lords, which some writers suppose to be coeval with the monarchy, and that every allodial possessor exercised a judicial authority so soon as he had seized upon his allotment; but it is more natural to imagine that it was a gradual extension of authority, which succeeding Monarchs, for the tranquillity of their government, found it necessary to sanction.

This authority, so unfavourable to the liberty of the lower orders of society, extended itself with rapidity, during the disorders of the first race of the Gallic Kings. The fortress of some powerful chief, and the sanctuary of a church, were the only asylums that presented themselves to the persecuted and unprotected multitude, in the civil wars, so frequent between the successors of Clovis. Escaping from the sword of the enemy, they too probably purchased safety with a portion of what little property they had been able to preserve from the ravage of a licentious army. The Dukes, and the Counts, the magistrates of their districts, no longer controlled by the interventive authority of a national Assembly, now scarcely ever convoked, or which consisted, when  
convened,

convened, of such only as were themselves oppressors, abused the confidence that had been reposed in them. Not daring to resort to the protection of the laws, the castle of the chief became again their refuge from the oppression of the magistrates, as it had before been a retreat of safety from the sword of warfare. A. D.

Charlemagne, a friend to the people, was anxious to restore to them a degree of consequence in the State: the cruelty and injustice to which they had become habituated, had worn down to apparent apathy the vigour of their minds, and rendered them alike indifferent to voluntary bondage, as to the repossession of their ancient rights. He began by a wise and salutary renunciation, within his own domains, of those claims which had been gradually assumed, as well from the bondsmen, as from the lower class of freemen. An example so powerful induced the Nobility to acquiesce in meliorating the oppressive and laborious service that had been exacted from the former class of people; and the recent taxes were abolished; while the latter found, from a strict and impartial administration of justice, redress for all their grievances. Courts of appeal obliged the magistrates to attend, without vexatious delays, to the performance of their duty: the territorial jurisdiction of the Lords was restrained; notwithstanding there are some instances, even during his reign, in which the  
Royal

**A. D.** Royal Judges were forbidden to enter into particular patrimonial districts. These regulations, with the right to seek redress at the foot of the throne, restored the people to a state of comfort and security, with which they had been unacquainted; and which they only continued to enjoy so long as his steady and impartial government sustained in equilibrium the scale of justice, and arrested the hand of power from crushing the weak and the unprotected.

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The Franks, in common with all uncivilized nations, had not any regular armies. The militia, assembled from the provinces, were commanded by the Dukes, under whom the Counts acted in a subordinate capacity: they were as well military as civil officers, their station partaking of both functions. Every freeman was a soldier; and repaired, upon the summons of the Count, to his standard; in default of which, the *herebannum*, a fine of sixty sols, was exacted, and which if he were unable to pay, he was reduced to a state of bondage, until his industry or his friends could redeem him from this mortifying servitude: Military aid had been originally voluntary: it was, however, early in the monarchy, exacted as a necessary duty for the general safety of the State; and penalties were required from such as refused to attend the Sovereign in his military expeditions. This was considered as so insupportable



portable a grievance, that instances occur wherein A. D.  
the profession of the church was embraced, to  
elude the service: hence it became requisite, to  
prevent this practice, to enact a particular law  
to prohibit it. As abuses speedily pervaded  
every part of the State,—those who wished to be  
exempted from military duty, purchased this  
inulgence from their leaders before the opening  
of the campaign; this favour was frequently  
obtained at a dear rate: the soldier, who had  
neither pay, nor subordination to the authority of  
his commander, and who, from his national cha-  
racter, was addicted to pillage, generally plun-  
dered the Canton before he left it, and indiscrimi-  
nately ravaged with impunity the country  
through which he passed, in his march to the ap-  
pointed rendezvous.

By the ordinances of Charlemagne, the officers  
were made responsible for the irregularities com-  
mitted, amenable to the regulations which he  
had introduced; and military service became once  
more honourable. The Capitularies decree that  
the possessors of four manors, or forty-eight acres,  
shall be obliged to march against the enemy: to  
that freeman unto whom only three belonged,  
was associated another, who held but one: the  
latter paid a fourth of the expences, and was not  
obliged to take the field. Two persons having  
each two manors,—the one who repaired to the  
army was indemnified in half of the expence by  
the



A. D. the one who remained at home. Six persons,  possessing but half a manor each, furnished one foldier; while those who had smaller possessions were entirely exempted. Such as repaired to the army were obliged to provide themselves with three months provisions; after which, if continued in the field, they were maintained by the Sovereign.

The freemen assembled by the Count, were by him led against the enemy; the Vicars, and the Centenarii, were his subordinate officers. The Lords, who enjoyed territorial jurisdictions, or possessed benefices according to the latter form, conducted their retainers, as did the Bishops and the Abbots theirs; until, being exempted from military service themselves, they appointed one of their vassals to lead the others to the field of warfare.

From this review we may observe that there were three distinct kinds of military service; one of which applied to the vassals of the Monarch, who carried their rear vassals to the field; another, to the Churchmen, who marched at the head of their retainers; and the third, to the Counts, under whose orders moved the freemen.

In the reign of Charlemagne the sword was substituted for the arrow; and the cavalry, scarcely used in the commencement of the monarchy, had become numerous and respectable; and,

and, from this cause, the annual meetings of A. D. March were by Pepin referred to May, as it became necessary to wait until a sufficient quantity of forage might be obtained for the ensuing campaign. Their warlike machines, and offensive weapons, they borrowed from the Romans, as likewise their military dress, which from the waist to the feet resembled theirs.

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Amidst barbarous nations, those persons who have an influence upon the consciences of the people, naturally possess an extraordinary share of individual power; hence that extensive and uncontrolled authority the priests of the Franks enjoyed in their native forests of Germany, became early and equally conspicuous in the peculiar deference paid to the sacred character in Gaul.

A convert to the Catholic religion, Clovis became its protector and support. He found the clergy, from the liberality of the Emperors, the superstition of the people, and the weakness of the Roman government, possessed of great wealth, with very extensive privileges; he respected their functions, and secured to them the enjoyment of their acquisitions: they were permitted to continue the use of the Roman law; and, from the consideration in which they were held, they probably became the bond of union between the Franks and the conquered nation.

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Notwith-

A. D. Notwithstanding the conversion of the Monarch, and the zeal of the prelates for the extension of the spiritual faith; it was a considerable time before Paganism was entirely abandoned; and even such as had renounced the errors of their persuasion, were not easily retained by the assumption of their newly-acquired doctrines.

In the reign of Clotaire the First, the Clergy assisted at a convocation that was held to reform the Salic and Ripuarian laws, and acquired to themselves by those means still more extended privileges. The life of a bishop was valued at nine hundred sols; that of a priest, at six hundred; of a deacon, four hundred; and that of a monk, at the same sum: if rank may be, therefore, deduced from the weight of composition, it is evident in what estimation were held the professors of the church.

The Clergy were early admitted into the national assemblies; and they obtained the first place in rank, exercising, in the absence of the Sovereign, the functions of his court of justice, revising the sentences of the Judges; and, uniting the temporal with the ecclesiastical character, exerted in many instances an authority over the Kings themselves. They excited them, as an expiation of their crimes, to found churches, to endow monasteries, and to confer frequent and liberal donations upon their Order. The most profuse of their Princes were too frequently the

the most vicious ; and oftentimes, when actuated A. D.  
by their necessities, were induced to reclaim the  
immense grants which they had prodigally and  
improvidently made.

The military service of the church appears to have taken its rise from the nature of its territorial jurisdiction. Such Lords as had established a right of judicial authority, conducted their retainers to the field ; the Clergy, who enjoyed still larger possessions, found it, perhaps, equally necessary to command their own vassals ; and thus a service which they probably imposed upon themselves, was considered as an actual and indispensable duty.

Whether this inconsistency of uniting the martial with the clerical character ; the admission of a military people, like the Franks, into holy orders ; or whether the general depravity was the cause ; we find the corruption of manners so great, and these productive of such disorders among the churchmen, that, by the end of the sixth century, they were a disgrace to the profession which they had embraced.

To behold the ministers of peace, forgetful of their sacred calling, daily imbruing their hands in blood ; the mitre, an emblem of meekness and of benevolence, resign its place to the sword of warfare ; the consecrated crozier, that should gather together the spiritual flock, forego its holy purpose, and invite to desolation and to




A. D. carnage; are objects of detestation, as they are equally of horror and disgust. Lost to that primitive purity of faith, so eminently conspicuous in the first teachers of the Gospel, a long and gross darkness involved and extended its baleful influence for many centuries over the most considerable part of the Christian world.

Churches became the sanctuaries of the most flagitious crimes: at the foot of the altar, or within the gloom of the cloister, the thief and the assassin found protection, indiscriminately, with the weak and oppressed. The episcopal palace was deemed a place of safety; nor were the refugees delivered up, without the most solemn engagements previously obtained of their future pardon. But the most sacred of these asylums was the celebrated cathedral of Saint Martin at Tours, at which the uncompunctuous Clotaire presumed, to offer his expiations, polluted as he was with the blood of the innocent sons of Clodomir, and the dreadful sacrifice he had made of Chramnes and his children to his inexorable resentment.

Having gradually assumed an exoneration from any responsibility but to their own tribunal, the sacred office became a desirable situation to the Nobility, of whom many, renouncing the most splendid employments, with eagerness embraced the possession of the mitre, under the pressure of whose mysterious circle they preserved, without danger or disgrace, honour, riches, and authority,



thority, those attainments that bind the vanity, A. D. while they disgrace the sense of men. 

Simony, too public and too much tolerated to be deemed disgraceful, with their continual absence from their dioceses, their servile attachment to the court, their love of vanity and public spectacles, sumptuous appeal, devotion to the chase, and the practice of arms, fitted them more for a temporal than a clerical life : can it therefore be wondered at, if the flock were not confined within the pale of regularity, when their pastors attended so little to the cultivation of their morals; or that the victorious Martel should reward his needy adherents with the riches of those who made so unhallowed an use of their possession?

To such a degradation had they arrived by the time of Clotaire the Second, that they gave themselves up to the most criminal debaucheries. Venus and Bacchus were the deities of their oblations, and superseded the observance of higher concerns. Renouncing the pacific character of the church, some led the profligate lives of banditti; others condescended to become assassins and poisoners; nor were treachery and rebellion wanting, to complete the number of their crimes. To collect, from the ancient writers, a full detail of their enormities, would be unworthy the pen of the historian, did it not serve to mark the general depravity that so universally prevailed whilst

A. D. the Merovingian Princes swayed the sceptre of France. There were, doubtless, some who were worthy of the spiritual station; but the general stream of morality was so much polluted, that it would be difficult to draw a line of discrimination between the turpitude of the many, and the purity of the few.

The early writers, who were mostly churchmen, extol in a strain of hyperbolic panegyric, the uncommon piety of their Kings. We read of the munificence and of the religious zeal of Clovis, at the very time in which he was impurpling his hands in the blood of his kindred; of the moderation of the weak and timid Gontran, the severity of whose punishments belied the supposed gentleness of his character; the mildness and justice of Clotaire, whose sanguinary disposition was too evidently portrayed in the fate of Brunehaut and the sons of Thierri. In short, as there were not real virtues to enumerate,—under an imaginary semblance they recorded the most cruel and flagitious atrocities.

The devotion of the times consisted in the extravagance of external ceremonies, not in the tacit oblations of the heart: the purity of the faith was estimated but by the magnitude of its donatives to the church; and those gifts, proportioned to the crimes of the profelytes, obtained from the gratitude of the ministers of religious

gious communities, a ready absolution and pardon for the most flagrant offences. A. D.

The large endowments, so profusely bestowed, produced however one good effect. The military character of the Franks, the spirit of which they infused into their conquered subjects, was unfavourable to the improvement of agriculture; the pious frenzy of the age, in some measure, corrected the growing evil. By an appropriation of extensive tracts of land to the religious Orders, the most desert parts of the kingdom were resorted to; forests were despoiled of their woods, for the construction of churches and abbeys: in exchange for the deep silence of the forests, were heard the chimes of the belfry, which awakened the enthusiast to mortification and to prayer; the most fertile provinces, as well as the most frightful solitudes, were peopled: to thorns and briars succeeded corn and vines; the fetid marsh was converted into the flowery meadow, and the velvet lawn; the silver rill, and the sounding torrent, were deduced from the mountains to turn the mill, or to irrigate the plains; and the monks being the possessors of numerous bondsmen, they not only cultivated the land, but raised villages, nay small towns, in the vicinity of their monasteries.

So early as the reign of Chilperic, the grandson of Clovis, the riches accumulated by the clergy, attracted the cupidity of that rapacious

A. D. Monarch; he bitterly inveighed against their opulence: "The Regal domains," said he, "are transferred to the church: none are in authority, excepting the bishops; the temporal reign is now no more." He annulled the donations of his father; but, upon his death, they were restored by Gontran.

The spiritual dominion was checked, if not entirely disarranged, by Charles Martel. His father had protected the Clergy; but, attached to no part of the community himself, excepting to his adherents in the field, he made free with their temporal concerns, to reward those to whom he was indebted for the success of his arms, and the stability of his power. From the blind superstition which pervaded all ranks of the community, he not only found them possessed of innumerable benefices, but the proprietors of the most valuable parts of the allodial lands: with a bold and indiscriminate hand he wrested from them their valuable acquisitions. It was in vain that they opposed, what they deemed so sacrilegious an encroachment upon their rights. An Abbot of Fontenelle, who had excited a rebellion of monks against him, he ordered to be beheaded; and the severity with which he proceeded against all such as any way opposed his views, offer to us a sufficient reason for those ridiculous tales fabricated by the Fathers of the eighth century, and for the virulence and exaggeration



ration with which they pursued the memory of A. D.  
this splendid character.

Pepin and Carloman, desirous of conciliating the clergy and the laity, issued *précaires*, ordaining that a proportion of the former produce of their lands should be allowed them, and a repossession upon the death of those who held them; a measure, as it was not enforced, that rather served to heighten the animosities already existing between the two Orders.

Charlemagne, at his accession, found the ecclesiastical lands in the hands of the soldiery, as his grandfather had those of the laity in the possession of the church. It was not probable that those who had obtained these new benefices, and who considered them as the reward of their valour and exertions, would readily be induced to restore them; he therefore judiciously waved the contest, and applied to other means to satisfy the clergy.—From extreme opulence, they had been reduced to a state of dependance, even to accept the protection of those for whose advantage they had been plundered. Such an humiliation, for men who were to direct the consciences of others, and who were to depend upon the precarious charity of individuals, for the supply of their wants, and the support of their functions, demanded a speedy and an efficient relief. He renewed the ordonnances of Pepin, enjoining a tenth to be paid of the  
produce



A. D. produce of those lands that had been wrested from them; a tax which, however burdensome and oppressive at that time considered, was yet the foundation for its becoming, under his successors, a general and determined one throughout the Gallic Empire.

This recent decree he enforced by conforming to it upon his own domains. It was manifest that he wished to restore to the church the dignity it had lost. By the ancient Canons the Clergy had nominated to vacant prelacies; the Merovingian Princes had usurped this right. The former, in consideration of being confirmed in their ecclesiastical jurisdictions, resigned it into the hands of Clotaire the Second, in the memorable meeting that was held at Paris. Charlemagne restored to them this ceded privilege; receiving them to his immediate protection, he consoled them for the mortifications they had endured, by nominating them to some of the most important offices of the realm, and by the liberal grants of innumerable benefices, more particularly in his German dominions.

Throughout the whole of his reign they were highly distinguished, and again became immensely opulent: his favourite Alcuin alone possessed three abbeys, with twenty thousand slaves; and his munificence was extended to them after his death. By a codicil to his will, his personal property was ordered to be divided into three shares;

shares; two of which he left to the church, to <sup>A. D.</sup> be distributed between the metropolitan and the suffragan bishops; the remaining third was again directed to be divided into four parts, one of which he bequeathed to his children, another to be added to the former gift, and the remaining two portions to charitable uses.

Having complained of the rigour of military service, they were dispensed with from attending him to the field; yet were they so strangely inconsistent as to lament that, by this exclusion, they had lost the estimation of the public.

The religious intolerance of Charlemagne, we have too frequently had occasion to lament. Bent upon the establishment of his faith, he suffered the zeal of the bigot to supersede the higher duties of justice and humanity. In his own dominions he was indefatigable in correcting the errors, and in reforming the manners of the clergy; and in enforcing upon their minds the necessity, and upon their practice the duties, of their spiritual ministration. There did not pass a single year in his long and interesting reign, in which was not held a council to regulate the spiritual welfare of the church; and in the last of his life, no less than six of these meetings were convened in different parts of his extensive dominions.

Bishops were not allowed by translation to exchange their sees, nor to absent themselves from their dioceses for a longer period than three weeks.

A. D. weeks. The custom of retaining by force the children of the Nobility who had been confined to the cloister by the authority of their parents, was suppressed; and they were permitted, when arrived at the age of puberty, to forego, if they thought proper, the monastic life. Women were not allowed to take the veil until their twenty-fifth year, nor a widow until ten days after the decease of her husband; the asylum that was afforded by the church to thieves and murderers was abrogated, and the delinquents were made amenable to the rigours of justice.

At this æra the Metropolitans indiscriminately took the appellation of Archbishops, which had been before used but with great reserve. The communion became an universal sacrament in both the public and the private observance of religion. Auricular confession, which had, in its commencement, been only required from the monks by their superior, was now extended throughout the whole community. The organ was introduced into divine service in the reign of Pepin the Short, to whom it had been presented by Constantine the Greek Emperor. Chaunting had been long in estimation; and Charlemagne so much delighted in it, that he was induced to make it a necessary part of education.

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In the warlike ages we have reviewed, it is natural to suppose that the principles of patience  
and

and industry, which are so necessary for the extension of trade, should be but little fostered among a people habituated to the din of arms; and who, unacquainted with artificial delicacies and modern refinements, were contented with the produce of the chase, and the subsistence which they derived from their flocks, and who alike disdained the commerce, as the arts and the learning, of the unwarlike Romans. But neglected as it may have been by the Merovingian Princes, it was not wholly lost: we find that, so early as the reign of Dagobert, there were established fairs, in places the most convenient, in point of centrivity, for the general resort of all nations; and, in that of Charlemagne, small companies of French merchants were accustomed to traffic with the Sclavonians, Abares, and Saxons. In a capitulary of that political Prince, his French subjects were particularly inhibited the sale of arms, and cuirasses, to the latter turbulent and warlike people. A. D.

Trade was, however, not suitable to the genius of the Franks, and was principally conducted by foreigners. The city of Arles had been long famous for its manufactories of embroidery in works of gold and silver; Narbonne and Marseilles were the places of resort for the vessels which came from Constantinople, the Italian cities, and Alexandria; and the commodities of those countries were dispersed over the provinces of



A. D. of France as far as Treves, by means of their navigable rivers; and from thence the importations of other nations were conveyed throughout the provinces. Embarking them upon the Rhone, they proceeded to Lyons, afterwards up the Soane and the Doux; from the latter they were transported in carriages to the Moselle, and finally transferred throughout the interior parts of the kingdom.

The most celebrated fair was that of Landy, removed by Charlemagne to Aix-la-Chapelle. Here the Frisons brought for sale their furs of the martin, the sable, the otter, with worsted clothing of ordinary texture. From Spain they received horses, and mules; from England they obtained corn, iron, tin, lead, copper, and dogs for the use of the chase. From Constantinople and Alexandria, were obtained the commodities of the East, with paper of Egyptian manufacture, oil, wine, and medicinal herbs. The exports from France consisted but of few articles, and those of inferior value; such as pottery, works in copper, honey, madder, salt, and wines, the growth of the country. The duties upon the imports and upon the exports, more especially the receipts of the tolls on the different rivers, made a very considerable portion of the revenues of the Kings.

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The cultivation of literature, contracted as it had become, was entirely confined to the education



tion of the Monks. The trifling remains of A. D. the works of ancient authors were preserved within their walls from total annihilation; and a monastery was alike the sacred asylum of persecuted weakness, as the retreat of the bigot, and the refuge of the tyrant. The scarcity of books, and the labour and expence of multiplying copies, may be considered as one of the leading causes of the darkness of the middle ages. A most deplorable ignorance pervaded Europe; not only Princes, but few of the elevated dignitaries of the church, could subscribe to the Canons of the Councils in which they presided. Charlemagne himself attained the art of writing at an advanced period of his life; but the radiations of his genius, burst through these early disadvantages, and in despite of the obscurity of the times, diffused a brilliant but a temporary lumination. He established schools throughout his extensive empire, steadily encouraged the professors of erudition, and acquired, by the most persevering assiduity, a knowledge so comprehensive in laws, politics, arts, and sciences, as would lead us to doubt the records of the early historians, were not the institutions of his reign, and the extent of his power and dominions, so amply and so fully elucidated.

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Money, with the corruption which it engenders, is a concomitant of civilization, and the source

A. D. source of almost every evil; it is a medium of luxury, but of little value where the arts of life, inducing superfluity, are little cultivated or known. The difficulty with which those precious metals that are destined to corrupt innocence, and to set up the crimes and miseries of life to sale, are extracted from the bowels of the earth, points out that the surface should be first exhausted before we dive into those repositories of nature with any machine more hostile than the plough. The accumulation of riches, as of honours, is but a precarious possession, and but seldom enjoyed when obtained. The uncultivated barbarian, unacquainted with its ideal value, covets it not, or considers its attainment as incompatible with liberty; contented with what nature spontaneously offers, or the exertions of hunting and fishing supply, he feels that natural equality of which wealth is ignorant.

The Franks had but little specie; their fines were paid in cattle, sheep, and other moveables, the value of which was settled by the laws. In the time of Charlemagne money was of nearly the same value as in the Roman Empire during the reign of Constantine. The golden *sol* of the Franks, the same as the Roman *solidus*, was in value equal to 85 grains and  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a grain; and to 40 *déniers* or *denarii* of silver, about eight-pence halfpenny English money. They had likewise silver *sols*, resembling the present  
*gros*

*gros écus*, or French crowns, and were equal to <sup>A. D.</sup> twelve *déniers*; but the *sol* or *sou* is now so much debased, that it is more of a copper coin, having but a trifling proportion of silver. The *livre*, an imaginary coin, was the representative of the numerary pound, or twelve ounces of silver, and rated at the value of twenty silver *sols*. The common necessities of life were then eight times cheaper than in the present century; twenty-four pounds of bread valued, in the Capitulars, at one *dénier*,—about a *liard* for a pound, which is now bought at nearly eight times that price.

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The Tudesque, or the German, was the vernacular tongue of the Franks; but intermixing it with that of the conquered nations, who used the Romanesque, or rustic Latin, they gradually lost their original language: and this latter is the foundation of the French, Italian, and Spanish languages.

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With the ferocious manners of Germany, the Franks blended the passions and the vices of the conquered nation. That innate love of liberty, that public spirit, which distinguished them in their contests with the Romans, was relaxed by the acquirement of ease, and the possession of wealth. Laws were indeed enacted, but they were not enforced: opulent from the injustice or the favour of princes, the nobles encouraged them in their most daring outrages; and perfidy

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became

A. D. became respectable:—nor do we find that any acts of magnanimity, any bursts of genius, or prognostications of science, distinguished either the Sovereigns or the subjects of the Merovingian race.

Unwilling to adopt whatever they might have found useful in the manners and regulations of their new subjects, they were more active to destroy than to preserve the fine cities, and the magnificent structures that had been erected by the Romans. To regenerate from ruin, and to rebuild from either comfort or necessity, had not yet entered into their rude system of politics. Brunehaut, indeed, was an exception to these charges of sacrilegious destruction: she repaired the old Roman causeways, and raised many public works of ornament and of use.

It cannot be justly said that there was any particular form of government, or any regular system of jurisprudence, from the end of the seventh century, until the reign of Pepin: the nation exhibited a continued scene of rapacity and of warfare, of violence and of usurpation.—He opened the path to brighter scenes;—with a masterly hand he sketched the outline of the political picture, and left his son to complete with a more vigorous and successful pencil, the magnificent, and, it is to be lamented, not a permanent work.

The French history affords not a reign more instructive, or more interesting to mankind, than the  
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the one we have just reviewed. Raised to a kingdom so extensive, encompassed by turbulent and ambitious neighbours, and over-run by innumerable domestic disorders, we cannot but admire with some degree of enthusiasm the tranquillity which the internal dominions of Charlemagne so uninterruptedly enjoyed for nearly half a century; while at the same time we lament that justice has obliged us to expose those dark shadows which obscure his most brilliant actions, and which must too frequently have filled with disgust the mind of the reader. His intolerant zeal for the propagation of his faith, which led him to such unexampled acts of inhumanity;—his usurpation of the dominions of the Lombards King, and the Dukedom of Bavaria;—however political, cannot be justified in the eye of the lover of justice;—and above all, the mysterious fate of the sons of Carloman, whose innocence alone ought to have been their protection. These circumstances combined, oblige us to allow that his most splendid attainments can never compensate for this unfavourable side of his character.

In taking a last farewell of this distinguished reign, the mind still fluctuates between resentment and complacency: the fondness of predilection has too often biased truth, and induced the historian to dwell upon the virtues, while he barely traces the stronger vices, of Charlemagne; and the philosopher would be led, in considering the actions of his life, to censure



A. D. more than to applaud. But his name will survive to the latest posterity; and it is to be wished that future Sovereigns, foregoing his errors, would only imitate that part of his conduct so worthy of example, his unwearied attention to the distribution of justice, his benevolence to the lower classes of his subjects, and the dignity with which he supported the splendor of the throne.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### THE REIGN OF LEWIS THE DEBONAIR.

His empire—Repairs to Aix-la-Chapelle—Reformations—Concessions to the Saxons and Frisians—Bernard's homage—Crowned by the Pope—Heriolte protected—Associates Lothaire in the empire—Pepin, King of Aquitaine—Lewis of Bavaria—Revolt of Bernard—Who submits—Condemnation and death—The natural sons of Charlemagne shaved and shut up—Breton's revolt—Death of Hermengarde—Marries Judith—Revolt of Linduit—Emperor's penance—Lothaire sent to Rome, and crowned—War with the Bretons—Ill success in Spain—External and domestic troubles—Lewis deserted by his army—And becomes the prisoner of his sons—Judith confined—The Emperor restored by Pepin and Lewis—Lothaire deprived of the title of Emperor—Pepin revolts—Deprived of his dominions—Bestowed upon Charles—A general insurrection—Lewis again a prisoner to his sons—Confined, and does public penance—Restored again to his dominions by Pepin and Lewis—Lothaire pardoned, and dismissed to Italy—Norman invasions—Charles, King of Neustria—Pepin dies—A new division of empire—King of Bavaria revolts—Submits, and again revolts—The Emperor prepares to chastise him—His death and character.

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AS the politics of the departed Prince seldom A. D.  
 serve as a rule of conduct to the one who may 814.  
 succeed, we shall be the less surpris'd at that  
 diversity of system that prevail'd, after the death  
 of the father, in the cabinet of the son; and it  
 would have been fortunate for his subjects, as  
 well as for his own domestic tranquillity, had the  
 latter possess'd a portion of that vigour and firm-  
 ness, for which the former had been so con-  
 spicuously distinguished, or that his disposition  
 and abilities had been equal to the energies of  
 action.

The prodigious extent of dominions bequeathed  
 by the late Emperor, had comprehended all the  
 present kingdom of France, nearly the whole  
 of the modern Germany, the Low Countries,  
 Switzerland, the country of the Grisons, a consi-  
 derable portion of Poland, Italy to the confines  
 of Beneventum, and that part of Spain lying on  
 this side of the river Ebro. In the limited  
 sphere of government to which he had been  
 entrusted, and in which the genius of Char-  
 lemagne had insensibly operated, Lewis, sur-  
 named the Debonair, from the gracefulness of  
 his manners, had conducted himself with cir-  
 cumstances so favourable to his general character,  
 that the failings of his mind, not having occasion  
 for extraordinary exertions, had, as yet, pass'd  
 unobserved.

The information which he received of the death  
 of his father, betray'd at once the weakness and

A. D. timidity of his successor. His mind was not sufficiently composed to enable him to enjoy the elevation to which he had attained, without a suspicion and a dread of faction. The power and popularity of Walla, a descendant of Martel, of whose ambition and restless disposition he was well apprised, and who in the former reign had been highly distinguished by the favour and confidence of the late Emperor, was the object of alarm to Lewis. Fearful that his absence from the capital might inspire him with the opportunity of disturbing the commencement of his reign, he, immediately upon the notification of his accession to the empire, quitted his palace of Theodad in Aquitaine, and arrived thirty days after at the Imperial city of Aix-la-Chapelle, attended by a force sufficient to disperse, had there really existed the faction which he had dreaded. Contrary, however, to his expectations, he found the nobles zealous to convince him of their duty and attachment, and Walla among the foremost to testify his allegiance, and acknowledge a submission to his lawful sovereign.

His apprehensions of public commotions being thus allayed, he turned his thoughts to the examination of the private disorders of the palace; not, perhaps, aware that, in his zeal for reformation, he might reflect upon the memory of his father, whose conduct, in the extreme indulgence he had allowed to his daughters, had laid him

him open to censure. He banished his sisters A. D. from the court to the abbeys assigned them for their support; considerably enlarged their portions, but punished with severity their seducers. He convened an assembly in his capital, wherein he confirmed the immunities of the church, and prepared himself to enter upon the arduous task of government.


The treaty with the Greek Emperor, Leo, the successor of Michael, was renewed; a considerable portion of the annual tribute exacted from Grimoalde, the Duke of Beneventum, remitted; and he generously restored to the Saxons and to the Frisians, the common rights of inheritance withheld from them by the late Emperor; an act of justice which secured to him their future gratitude and allegiance! Some Gothic troops, which had entered into Septimania to avoid the persecutions of the Saracens in Spain, had been equally oppressed by the subjects of Lewis; he took them under his protection, and allowed them the enjoyment of all those privileges attached to freemen.

The next year Bernard, the King of Italy, repaired to the Diet assembled at Padderborn, to tender his oath of fidelity, a stipulation imposed by Charlemagne when he surrendered to him the dominions of Pepin. And Stephen the Fifth required from the Roman people, a renewal of their oath of allegiance to the new Sovereign;

A. D. 817. repairing, soon after, himself into France, to place the diadem upon the head of Lewis, and upon that of his Empress Hermangarde. To divide the power of the Normans, or Danes, as they are indiscriminately called by the French historians, and to prevent their frequent depredations, he protected Heriolte, a competitor for the crown of Denmark: his exertions, however ineffectual to establish him in the sovereignty, preserved for a while the security of his maritime provinces.

The empire had hitherto enjoyed a considerable portion of tranquillity, if we except a trifling disturbance among the Gascons and the Sorabians: but the imprudence of Lewis now opened to himself a scene of contention and misery, which accompanied him, with little interruption, to the concluding hours of his life. Induced by the example of his father to a division of his dominions, he was not sensible of the vast dissimilarity of their dispositions. The sons of Charlemagne had been merely his governors in those provinces which he had permitted them to hold with the royal title; and the admirable subordination which he had preserved to himself, was not so much to be attributed to their duty, as to that mental vigour in which his successor was wholly deficient. Having obtained the concurrence of the general meeting held at Aix-la-Chapelle, the Emperor associated Lothaire, his eldest son,



son, in the empire: the kingdom of Aquitaine he bestowed upon Pepin; and to Lewis, the youngest, he gave the dominion of Bavaria. A. D. 

The King of Italy, offended at the late partition of sovereignty, and infligated by the disaffected clergy, who had not approved of the reformations of the Emperor in the church, took up arms, with the flattering hope of obtaining the imperial diadem. The Archbishops of Milan and Cremona, with the Bishop of Orleans, and Adelard, Abbot of Corbie, the brother of Walla, were among those who espoused his cause: but, with an activity of which his enemies did not suppose him capable,—Lewis assembled a numerous force, and determined, by passing into Italy, to crush, in its commencement, the spirit of rebellion; but, upon his arrival at Chalons, he found the means, by negociation, to induce the most considerable part of the Italian army to abandon their leader.—Bernard, thus deserted, and relying upon the gentleness ascribed to the disposition of his uncle, repaired to his camp, and upon his knees implored his clemency and pardon. But he too soon found, from the frigid reception he experienced, that he could not flatter himself with the hope of indulgence: and, at the ensuing assembly at Aix-la-Chapelle, he was condemned, as were the principal conspirators, to expiate, by their deaths, the disturbances they had occasioned. By a singular kind of mitigation, their sentence was commuted by the Emperor to the deprivation  
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A. D. 818. tion of sight; and the unfortunate grandson of the distinguished Charlemagne, conspicuous for his abilities, beloved by his subjects, and only in the twentieth year of his age, expired three days afterwards, in consequence of the cruel outrage that had been inflicted upon his person. The Clergy, who had been the chief promoters of the revolt, were excluded from the severity of this punishment, and only suffered a degradation and banishment! In dread of future conspiracies, the Emperor, by a weak and unjustifiable policy, ordered his three illegitimate brothers to be shaved, and confined in different monasteries.

From this melancholy scene, his attention was turned to the Bretons, who assumed to themselves the nomination of a king: he repaired in person into Brittany, and committed such devastations, that upon the death of their chief, assassinated in a sedition, they submitted, and received Norman, the Count appointed by him to the government of that province. Upon his return from this expedition, he lost Hermangarde, his queen. Naturally inclined to a monastic life, this event encouraged his wishes for a seclusion from the world: and it was with some difficulty that he was prevailed upon to divert these ideas by espousing Judith, a daughter of Guelph, Duke of Bavaria, highly endowed both with personal charms and mental qualifications. In the same year Linduit, a Duke of the Huns, revolted, and

and prevailed upon the Sclavonians to join him. A. D. 822.  
He maintained a vigorous and successful war of some continuance, defeated several armies employed against him, and was at length slain by the treachery of a Dalmatian Lord.

At a meeting held at Thionville, the Emperor restored to those prelates who had been some years before disgraced, their confiscated estates; and his mind became so much disturbed by reflecting upon his conduct to Bernard, and the sons of Charlemagne, that he was induced by Adelard, his favourite minister, to enjoin himself a public penance before a numerous meeting held at Attigny, as an atonement for his inhumanity; and, not satisfied with this humiliation, he, at the same time, sullied the lustre of the Imperial dignity by an enumeration of self-imputed errors. After so extraordinary an instance of his weakness, we cannot be surprised that he was no longer respected, or that his subjects were willing to condemn one who so anxiously sought to condemn himself. To his brothers he offered his permission to quit the spiritual life which he had compelled them to embrace; but they refused to accept of his concession, and still continued to prosecute their clerical functions.

The Popes, sensible of his weakness, assumed to themselves the pontifical honours without awaiting his approbation, and proceeded with so much violence and oppression in their administration

A. D. 823—30 nistration of justice, that the Emperor was constrained to dispatch Lothaire into Italy, to hear and redress the grievances of the nobility and of the Roman people. Not, however, presuming openly to reject his power,—Pascal the First received the son of Lewis with respectful attention, and placed the imperial diadem upon his head; but the disorders still prevailing, he found it necessary to re-establish a royal envoy, to preserve the tranquillity of the city.

The Bretons, who with equal perseverance contended for their liberty as the Saxons had done for their religion, resumed their baffled courage, and, assembled under their leader Viomaque, again attempted to shake off the yoke of France. The Emperor, with his sons Pepin and Lewis, dividing their forces, entered into Brittany in three different divisions, laid waste their possessions, and encamped before the walls of Rennes. Perceiving how unavailing was their struggle against so powerful an opponent, they laid down their arms, invoked his clemency, and obtained, by their solicitations, a cessation of warfare. Upon the retreat of the victorious army, they resumed their depredations, but were constrained, after having lost their valiant chief, to submit to the power of Lambert, the Imperial general.

Not so fortunate in Spain, Lewis had the mortification to find, within the space of a few years, his interest in that kingdom nearly annihilated.

Aizus,



Aizus, a Goth, had seized upon Offuna in Catalonia; and, assisted by the arms of the Saracen King of Cordova, swept, with a desolating course, the countries in the neighbourhood of Barcelona and Girona, before the forces commanded by the King of Aquitaine were in a situation to arrest their rapid progress. Lothaire, with a considerable body of troops, was sent to join his brother; when, advancing as far as Lyons, and consulting with Pepin on the moderation of the enemy, who, satisfied with their recent conquests, had shewn no inclination to continue their hostilities,—they made no further effort to recover those territories which had been torn from the empire; a conduct, not reflecting much credit upon the valour and perseverance of the descendants of Charlemagne! And the Emperor, embarrassed by external enemies as well as domestic disturbances, had not leisure to attend to the recovery of those distant and dismembered provinces. From his inability to protect them, the people of Navarre choose Inigo their sovereign, and established that kingdom and Arragon. A. D.

Heriolte, whom he had enduced to embrace Christianity, whose cause he had invariably espoused, and at length seated on the Danish throne, had been recently driven from thence; and the Bulgarians, entering into Pannonia, committed dreadful ravages in that province, the government




A. D. government of which had been entrusted to Balderic the Duke of Friuli, who was deprived of his duchy for the feeble resistance he had made to their incursions. The Saracens, who had for some time been in possession of the Island of Sicily, from thence extended their depredations, and threatened to overwhelm his Italian provinces by their repeated piracies and devastations. The Neapolitans, unable to defend themselves against these invaders, offered to renounce their allegiance to the Greek Emperor, and to submit to the dominion of Lewis; but of this flattering renunciation he was not in a situation to avail himself: a formidable combination had been for some time past forming to disturb his tranquillity; and these recent calamities had accelerated the plans of the disaffected confederates.

The powerful influence which Judith had obtained over the mind of the Emperor, and the anxiety she naturally felt for a respectable establishment for Charles, her infant son, excited the secret resentment of his brothers. Their divisions of sovereignty had been long ascertained: and they were unwilling to forego, in favour of a new competitor, any part of those territories which they had been allowed to consider as their peculiar inheritance. The adherents of Bernard, King of Italy, who had been exiled and recalled, and those officers who had been disgraced in the late unfortunate war in Spain, taking advantage of the distrust

distrust that had arisen in the minds of the young Princes, inflamed their resentments, and infused into their hearts a portion of those turbulent passions by which their own had become disturbed. •

A. D.  
830.

The Empress had prevailed upon Lewis to confer the dignity of Chamberlain, or confidential Minister, upon Bernard, Count of Barcelona; a sovereignty was projected for the infant Charles, to comprehend all those countries lying within the Danube, the Maine, the Neckar, and the Rhine, with Rhætia, that district now possessed by the Grisons, and Burgundy-Transjurane, which forms the present territories of Switzerland. The haughty carriage of the new favourite, with the ascendancy he possessed over the mind of Judith, and, above all, the late acquisition she had obtained for her son, increased the general discontents; and at length induced Lewis to appoint a commission to inquire into the disorders that had arisen in the government. Walla, one of the principal leaders of the opposite faction, was included in this legation; and at the ensuing assembly, held at Aix-la-Chapelle, he publicly accused the Emperor, as being himself the sole cause of all the disturbances that had arisen in the State; and at the same time boldly asserted that the Empress Judith had been unfaithful to his bed. Fostered by these seditious insinuations, a revolt in Brittany opened the way to the operations of their long-concerted plans.

 A. D. plans. Hilduin, Abbot of Saint Denis, the Bishops of Vienne, Lyons, and Amiens, as formidable for their extensive territories as for the character of piety and wisdom they had acquired, openly took up arms: they were readily joined by the disaffected from all quarters; and, when their numbers were sufficiently formidable, the sons of the Emperor avowed their support, and became the partisans of this unnatural war.

Deserted at Compiègne by the army he had prepared to chastise the Bretons, he sent the Empress to a monastery at Laon, as a place of safety; dismissed Bernard to his government; and submitted to become the prisoner of the rebellious Pepin. Judith, forced from her retreat, was compelled to receive the veil at Saint Redegonde of Poitiers; and, upon the arrival of Lothaire from Italy, he approved and confirmed every thing that had been done, proceeded with rigour against her favourites and adherents, and deprived the Emperor of all concern whatever in the administration of government.

In silence and seclusion the degraded Lewis consumed the spring and the summer, with a mind not yet broken by misfortune, and with a conscience satisfied with the rectitude of his intentions: it was in vain that he was hourly assailed by the Monks placed about him, to abdicate the empire; with firmness he resisted their persuasions; and, by his conciliating manners, induced

induced them to become his most zealous adherents. Gombaud, the most conspicuously active in his cause, so eloquently represented to the Kings of Aquitaine and Bavaria, how much they had mistaken their interest in depressing the authority of a kind and indulgent father, for the precarious friendship of a brother, who perhaps had no other view but to make them the instruments of his own elevation, that they not only entreated the pardon of the Emperor, but exerted themselves to restore to him the dignity he had lost. A. D.

By the address and perseverance of his partisans, the ensuing convention was held at Nimeguen, in opposition to the inclinations of Lothaire, who, conscious of the influence he possessed on this side of the Rhine, endeavoured to have the meeting assembled in Neustria. The reliance upon the fidelity of his German subjects fully answered the most sanguine expectations of the Emperor: he was re-established in his authority; and his rebellious son, encouraged by his conciliatory offers, repaired to his parental arms, and received from his affection a confirmation of peace and forgiveness. His adherents were tried, convicted of treason, and condemned to death; but the rigour of this sentence was reversed by the clemency of their Sovereign: the Bishop of Amiens was deposed, and the punishment

A. D. ment of his confederates exchanged and mitigated to a confinement in separate monasteries.

No sooner restored to empire, than anxious to repair the disgrace of Judith, he prevailed upon the Pope to absolve her vows; and she returned to court with the same haughty spirit, and that insatiable thirst of power, which had been before the preludes of her fall. Animated with resentment at her recent sufferings, Lothaire was soon made sensible of her animosity; he was degraded from the Imperial dignity, and dismissed to Italy; and the restless Walla condemned to a strict confinement in a fortress upon the banks of the Lake of Geneva: but the flame so feebly checked soon burst forth with redoubled force; and the same cause operated again to disturb the tranquillity of Lewis.

Impatient of her unbounded influence in the government, the brothers renewed their intrigues. The Count of Barcelona, who had been recalled from Spain, finding that the Empress was directed by other councils, united himself with Pepin, who, with the King of Bavaria, openly revolted. The Emperor, with a numerous force, prepared to chastise his rebellious sons: passing the Rhine, he pursued the King of Bavaria to Aufburg, who, disappointed in some promised succours, and not being able with his inferior army to resist his father's arms, had recourse to his clemency, and once more received his forgiveness.



giveness. More exasperated against Pepin, he A. D. 832. dispossessed him of his dominions; and, by an ill-judging policy, bestowed them in the moment of danger upon Charles, his youngest son. This imprudent step was the signal for a general insurrection. Lothaire, accompanied by the sovereign Pontiff, Gregory the Fourth, forced the passes of the Alps that had been carefully guarded, to prevent his return into France, and joined his brothers Lewis and Pepin, who, with a considerable army, had already taken the field. The contending parties encamped within sight of each other, for several days, between Strasbourg and Basil, under the mutual hope of seeing the strength of their opponents become daily weakened by desertion. The Pope, not avowing any other motive for his interference than to moderate, by his presence, their impetuosity, and by his spiritual exhortations the effusion of domestic blood, was dismissed to the Imperial camp, to procure, by his mediation, terms of accommodation and peace. Whether he was himself deceived, or meant to act the part of an artful negotiator; the morning after his departure for Italy, the unfortunate Lewis found himself totally abandoned by his whole army, which had been seduced from his standard while he had been employed in conference with the holy father. Once more a prisoner to his unnatural children, in a tumultuous meeting of the principal

A. D. 833. pal officers, he was declared incapable of government—instantly deposed; and Lothaire unanimously proclaimed his successor. The Kings of Aquitaine and Bavaria, rewarded by the territories of their youngest brother, returned to their respective dominions; and Charles was rigidly confined to the monastery of Prüm, in the forest of Ardennes.

That of St. Medard at Soissons was chosen to be the residence of the degraded Emperor. It was not sufficient for the unfeeling heart of Lothaire, that he had wrested from him his dearest connexions, that he had torn the diadem from his brow; but another scene of iniquity was yet wanting, to close the measure of his crimes. He was led to the altar of the church of Notre Dame in the above city, where, prostrate upon a hair cloth, in the presence of the bishops, abbots, the nobility, and a croud of spectators, assembled upon this solemn and extraordinary occasion, he had the weakness to read aloud a confession, drawn up for the purpose, of a variety of imputed errors. Divested of his military girdle, and clothed in the ordinary habit of a penitent, he was conducted back to his place of confinement, had a cell assigned him, there to spend his future days in mortification and prayer, without attendance, and divested of every thing that could add to his comforts, or alleviate his afflictions. A scene so humiliating was far from answering the

the expectations of this unnatural son. The sufferings of a Monarch, whose misfortunes had principally arisen from his tenderness for those who had so ill repaid his affection, excited the pity, as it aroused the indignation of the nation; and even many of those who had suffered themselves to be seduced from their duty, were awakened to shame and regret for the part they had taken in the debasement of their sovereign. A. D.

The King of Bavaria, whether touched with remorse in consequence of the remonstrances of the Bishop of Mentz, for his conduct towards his father, or probably expecting to establish a superior interest by his restoration, reunited with Pepin in the pursuit of such measures as might successfully promote their intentions. Not prepared for the celerity of their motions, Lothaire found himself in danger of being surrounded by the numerous forces that were assembling from every part of the empire; and having removed the Emperor, with his son Charles, to St. Denis, he hastily retired to Vienne.

Thus once more restored to liberty and to empire, the feeble and superstitious Monarch refused to assume the Imperial habit, before he had received absolution from the Prelates, to whose restless intrigues he might justly have imputed a large portion of the disgrace he had endured. Ebbo, Archbishop of Rheims, who had been elevated

A. D. vated from the lowest rank of servitude, by the bounty of Lewis, and who had been the chief instrument of the degrading scene at St. Medard, was deprived of his fee—too gentle a fate for the ingratitude and insolence which he displayed, upon that memorable day, to his sovereign and benefactor! Lothaire, who was still in arms, having nearly destroyed the city of Chalons, ravaged and committed the most wanton devastations in the Orleannois. Unable to withstand the united efforts of his brothers, to reduce him to obedience, he was obliged to sue for pardon in the view of both armies, at the feet of an offended, but too indulgent a parent, who, losing in his joy of reconciliation, all memory of his former sufferings, attached no other punishment to his crimes, than an order for his speedy departure for Italy, and a prohibition of ever returning again into France, without his knowledge and approbation.

While these intestine troubles harassed the mind of Lewis, his dominions were disturbed by the invasions of the Normans, whose destructive devastations, so feebly repelled by the arms of the empire, encouraged their frequent and alarming depredations, and prevented him from an intended expedition to Rome, to chastise the irregular and oppressive conduct of Lothaire in Italy. Continually assiduous to promote the interest of her son, Judith had sufficient influence to get him



him proclaimed, in an assembly at Chierfy, the <sup>A. D.</sup> King of Neustria. The ensuing year was marked <sup>838.</sup> by the premature death of the King of Aquitaine in his thirty-fifth year, leaving two sons, Pepin and Charles, and a daughter; an event which was followed by fresh troubles and new disputes.


The recent investment of Neustria appeared not to the ambitious mother of Charles, a sufficient patrimony for her son; and the tender years of those of the deceased Pepin, proved a temptation to enlarge his territories, which she was willing to take the advantage of. But, as the Emperor's advanced period of life made it probable that she might, as well as the young King, stand in need of a protector,—she flattered the ambition of Lothaire with the promise of a considerable addition to his sovereignty, if he would unite in her councils. Upon the intimation of her plans, he repaired with alacrity to the Diet of Worms, and fully entered into her views. A new partition took place of all the Imperial dominions, excepting those possessed by the King of Bavaria: they were equally divided between the Kings of Italy and Neustria, and sanctified by the authority of the Assembly.—Highly incensed at his exclusion from a share of the spoils, Lewis took up arms to avenge the injustice of his father; but the vigilant Monarch advanced with rapidity to Mentz, disconcerted his plans before they were ripe for execution, and constrained



A. D. him to submit to a force he was unable to withstand.

840.

Satisfied with his promised obedience, the Emperor returned into Aquitaine; and the restless Prince recommenced hostilities. The unfortunate Lewis, not destined to enjoy a moment's respite from domestic contention, prepared again for the field of warfare. Advancing to Worms, he was seized with a fever; but, yet resolved to pursue his intentions, he proceeded as far as Mentz: finding his disorder undermining imperceptibly his strength, he was conveyed to an adjacent island in the Rhine, where, worn out with care and affliction, his end was hastened by an eclipse of the sun, which he conceived prognosticated his death. He languished for several weeks, taking no other sustenance than the frequent repetition of the communion; until, exhausted, less by his disorder than by his superstition, he expired in the sixty-second year of his age, in the twenty-seventh of his accession to the empire, and in the arms of his brother the Archbishop of Mentz, who had been ever faithfully and warmly attached to his interest. In his last moments he ordered that his sword, his crown and sceptre, should be delivered to Lothaire, implying his succession to the empire, with the strict injunction of his protection to the Empress, and her son Charles. To Lewis he left his forgiveness, and bade him seek a pardon from  
heaven,

heaven, for having brought down his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. Of his sons we have already made frequent mention: by his first Empress he had also five daughters—Alpaide, Geffilie, Hildegarde, Adelaide, and Rotrude. A. D. 

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Louis le Débonair, also surnamed the Pious, the Gentle, and at length the Feeble,—as King of Aquitaine, had given early and flattering indications of his talents for government; his capacity had been diligently examined, and his education carefully attended to by the late Emperor. He was well acquainted with the Greek and the Latin languages, and imbibed with peculiar facility the lessons of erudition that were intended to enrich his mind. His deportment was serious, but graceful; he excelled in the manly exercises of horsemanship and archery, for which the strength and vigour of his body were particularly calculated; and, in the situation in which he had been placed, he found himself possessed of sufficient abilities to enable him to reform the manners, and to cultivate the happiness of his peculiar subjects; and had obtained from his easy government, his irreproachable and liberal conduct, an affectionate attachment and a willing obedience from the people of Aquitaine to his person and authority. From these favourable and peaceful scenes he was called upon to

struggle

A. D. struggle with difficulties and rebellions; to see his authority despised; and to become a prey to sorrows the most pungent, as to humiliations the most disgraceful.

The comprehensive and intuitive genius of the father, for a while, upheld the empire of the son; as, after a brilliant day, the twilight appears insensibly to be prolonged: but, at length, torn by domestic dissensions, the grandeur of the political mass began to crumble into dust; yet, however convulsed in its internal splendor, the solidity it had attained preserved its glory, a few years longer, undiminished abroad.

Lewis was desirous of acting well; but neither his judgment, nor the firmness of his mind, was equal to the station to which he had been elevated. With few vices of the heart, he had numberless defects of the understanding. Contracted within the narrow sphere of observation which his Court afforded, his views extended not, as they should have done, over his vast dominions; and, in the trivial debates of the palace, were consumed those moments of enquiry which should have been actively employed in the investigation of the prosperity of his empire, and the tranquillity of his people.

Influenced by his passion for, or subdued by the authority of his wives, he was induced to make those frequent divisions of his territories which were the leading errors of his government.

ment; as, in the consequences that ensued, they A. D.  
proved the sources of his misfortunes. Alternately giving and re-dividing their portions of inheritance, he trifled with the oaths of his children and his subjects, until they were taught to consider them as no longer binding. Neither feared nor beloved, he knew not how to exact obedience, or to conciliate affection: prodigal of his favours to attach the turbulent, he became the prey of their ingratitude and rebellion. Cruel rather from weakness than from inclination, he suffered the son of a brother to be condemned to a death so horrid in its nature, that even the sanction of the legislature was but a weak argument for its execution,—possessed, as his remorse evinces, of the power to commute or spare. From the most mean and dependent situations of life, he raised men to the first ranks in society; and they became the most active to abuse his confidence, and to resist his will. For ever guided by the arts or caprice of others, he betrayed neither firmness nor consistency; and, to satisfy the insatiable ambition of the mother of Charles, he was unjust to the sons of Pepin.

Modest, chaste, pious, and condescending, he was a dupe to his very virtues:—his piety degenerated into superstition; his affability, into meanness; and his indulgence to his children, into a weakness that encouraged them to ingratitude



A. D. and contempt. To sum up his character in few words; he was—a father without authority, a politician without system, and an emperor without dignity; better calculated for the tranquillity of a monastic life, than for the meridian of a throne; with trials and misfortunes sufficiently severe to call forth our execration against his persecutors, as our humanity and sympathy for his sufferings.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE REIGN OF CHARLES THE BALD.


Lothaire invades the territories of his brothers—Charles despoiled of the larger part of his dominions—Battle of Fontenoy—Division of the empire at Verdun—Lothaire, Emperor and King of Italy—Lewis, King of Germany—Charles the Bald, King of France—The latter Prince assailed by Pepin—The Normans—The Bretons—Aquitaine resigned to Pepin—Transactions in Germany and Italy—Weakness of the royal authority—The succession regulated at Mersen—Ravages of Normans—Herispée acknowledged King of Bretagne—Affairs of Aquitaine—Charles and his brother Pepin shaved and confined—The Saracens in Italy—Abdication—Death and character of Lothaire—His sons—Lewis, Emperor and King of Italy—Lothaire, King of Lorraine—Charles, King of Provence—Lewis the German crowned King of France—Charles the Bald restored—Revolts of his sons—The Normans—Lothaire's disputes with the Pope—His death—His dominions divided between his uncles—The fate  
of



of Carloman—The Normans—Death of the Emperor Lewis the Second—Succeeded by Charles the Bald—Death of Lewis the German—His character—Treachery of the new Emperor—And defeat—Carloman, King of Bavaria—Lewis, King of Germany—Charles the Gros, King of Allemagne—Normans—Saracens—The Emperor goes to Italy—His death and character.

A. D.  
840.

NO sooner was the departed Lewis in his grave, than that disunion of interest so imprudently made by his division of empire began to appear in the fatal consequences that ensued. Lothaire, who had violated every filial tie, regardless of those oaths so solemnly exacted by his father, for the protection of the young King of Neustria; and having failed in his attempt upon the territories of the King of Bavaria, whom he found ready prepared to defend his dominions—turned his arms towards Charles, from whose youth, not having attained his eighteenth year, he drew the most flattering prognostications of success: nor was he deceived in his expectations; for with a rapidity his brother was as little prepared for, as he was unable to repel, he reduced to his obedience the whole country as far as the Loire; and drew over to the support of his cause, Pepin, son of the late King of Aquitaine; Ebbo, the degraded Archbishop of Rheims, whom he restored to his see; and Hilduin, the turbulent Abbot of St. Denis. Charles, undismayed, and supported by a few faithful adherents, repaired to Bourges,

**A.D.**  Bourges, obliged Pepin, then besieging the Empress Judith in that city, to abandon his enterprise, and advanced to meet his brother near Orleans. But here he found the Imperial army so far superior in numbers to his small force, that he was unwillingly constrained to accept of whatever terms the Emperor thought proper to impose, and which only left him the contracted sovereignty of Languedoc, Provence, and Aquitaine.

This recent acquisition of territory was not sufficient to satisfy the ambition of Lothaire. Charles having passed into Brittany to chastise a revolt in that province,—his return was obstructed by an army sent by his brother to oppose his passage of the Seine; and with another he proceeded himself to the Rhine, to prevent Lewis from passing that river. In spite of the vigilance of his opponents, the King of Neustria effected his retreat to Troyes; but the Bavarian Monarch, having lost many of his troops by defection, prudently retired into his dominions: nor did the Emperor pursue him; for, although he was not deficient in personal valour, he never, in any of his undertakings, acted with consistency; and with superior forces he was ever more prone to temporise than act. Fortune had been hitherto propitious to his ambitious pursuits; but Lewis and Charles, conscious of their precarious situation, entered into  
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a strict alliance of amity, and of mutual defence. A. D. 842.  
Having with some difficulty formed a junction of their forces, they endeavoured to prevail upon the Emperor to consent to a fair and honourable discussion of their respective rights; but all hopes of accommodation proved to be abortive; arms became the only alternative; and the troops of the contending Princes were drawn up upon the plains of Fontenoy in Burgundy. This conflict, distinguished by the unnatural contention of three Sovereigns, whom the ties of consanguinity should have bound in the pleasing chains of fraternal affection, and fatal from the torrents of Gallic blood shed upon that memorable day, commenced on the twenty-fifth of June. The first part of the action promised success to the most sanguine expectations of Lothaire, and Pepin, who had joined him with considerable succours from Aquitaine: he attacked the opposing squadrons with a most dreadful and persevering slaughter; and a report that Charles had fallen a victim to his valour, had nearly ascertained his victory; but so capricious is Fortune, and so ready upon momentous occasions to sport with the confidence of men, that, almost at the last exertion of his opponents, a body of reserve, consisting of troops assembled from Provence and Thoulouse, arrived at the critical juncture, and assailed the astonished victors; restored the vigour of the desponding and scattered forces of  
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A. D. the two Kings; and decided, after a dreadful carnage of the Imperial troops, in their favour the no longer disputed fields of contention. We are taught to believe that an hundred thousand Franks crimsoned with their blood this fatal spot; a devastation of the species, however exaggerated, that must have been sufficiently dreadful to have been long and severely felt. Satisfied with their conquest, they pursued not a flying enemy; nor did they derive any further advantages from this decisive engagement. Lewis returned to Bavaria, Charles to Aquitaine; and Lothaire was suffered to collect, unmolested, new resources, and to become again so formidable, that, in the ensuing year, the two Kings found their mutual safety depended upon more efficient measures.

They met at Strasbourg; and the Emperor persisting in a rejection of all terms of accommodation, the general indignation was so inflamed against this destroyer of his country, that his brothers were enabled to assemble so respectable and encreasing a force, that they ventured to advance against him. Dreading a similar disaster to that he so fatally experienced at Fontenoy; and yet unwilling to forego the vain hope of sole sovereignty; he retreated to Aix-la-Chapelle, seized upon the moveables of the palace, plundered of its treasures the church of St. Mary's, that had been magnificently adorned by Charlemagne,



magne, precipitately retired, laden with the A. D. spoils, to Lyons, from whence he might find a safe passage into Italy, should he think it necessary to quit that city. 844.

Lewis and Charles, pursuing the advantages resulting from his flight, assembled a council of Bishops and Abbots at Aix-la-Chapelle, and, entrusting to them the dangerous power of bestowing kingdoms, received from their decree, all those territories that had been held by Lothaire on this side the Alps. The Emperor, alarmed at this partition of his dominions, was sufficiently humbled to propose himself terms of accommodation: his authority, although weakened, was yet of that consequence, as to induce an acceptance of his proffers of peace; and at Verdun, by a new treaty, which he endeavoured to the last moment to evade, he was suffered to possess, with the Imperial honours, and the kingdom of Italy, the whole tract of country lying between the Rhone, the Rhine, the Soane, the Meuse, and the Scheld. Lewis, from hence surnamed the German, was to enjoy all that territory so called, with the peculiar districts of Worms, Spire, and Mentz: Charles, distinguished in history by the appellation of the Bald, with the title of King of France, was to retain the sovereignty of Aquitaine, Neustria, and Languedoc, nearly what is understood to be the present extent of that kingdom. Judith did not survive to be a

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witness



A. D. 844. witness of their reconciliation; she died a short time before its conclusion at Tours. A princess, more censured perhaps than meriting reprehension; yet whose restless disposition, and ambitious projects, were the principal causes of the numerous misfortunes the Emperor had endured.

The flame of civil discord, although suppressed, was not, by any means, extinguished: the three Sovereigns were called upon to exert their utmost vigilance to preserve their respective dominions. Pepin, who had not been thought of in the late partition, continued for some time to enjoy a considerable interest in Aquitaine, and employed the attention of the French Monarch, whose kingdom was alternately assailed by the adherents of his nephew, joined by William the son of Bernard Count of Barcelona, who, convicted of treason, had been condemned and put to death; and, finally, by the dreadful inroads of the Normans.

Those fierce nations which rushed in swarms, in thirst of plunder, from the inhospitable regions of Scandinavia, that peninsula of Europe which comprehended the kingdoms of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, and whose horrible ravages contributed to shorten the population of this portion of the globe, were known to the French, in their dreadful invasions of that kingdom, under the general appellation of Normans, or  
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men of the north, as they were to the English by A. D. that of the Danes. Destitute of arts and of manufactures, and residing where a barren soil would scarcely have recompensed their exertions, had they been inclined to industry; plunder and warfare had become necessary to their very existence. Ferocious in their manners, their enthusiastic valour was nourished by a religion as barbarous as it was sanguinary. To fall in battle, they supposed, was to be attended with certain reward hereafter. To Odin, their chief deity, they sacrificed human victims; and, apportioned to the number of warriors they had slain, was to be the favour and distinction they expected to await their enjoyment in a future state. Their light vessels, of a size sufficient to carry about an hundred men, and for which their inexhaustible forests supplied them with the materials, were well calculated for their rapid descents on the maritime provinces of Europe. In the reign of Charlemagne, the vigilance of that Monarch could not prevent their devastations on the Frisian and Saxon coasts. In that of Lewis le Débonair, they burnt and plundered Antwerp. After his death, and while his sons were busy in the pursuit of their mutual destruction, they sailed up the Seine, surprised and sacked the city of Rouen, and retired unmolested with their booty.

Nomenon, the Duke of Bretagne, to assert his independency, had also taken advantage of the

A. D. civil wars, and had made himself the master of the whole of that province, excepting the cities of Nantes and Rennes. Assisted by the French General, Lambert, Herispée his son defeated an army sent by Charles the Bald, in the neighbourhood of the river Villaine. Their treacherous ally, rewarded by the government of the former city, did not long continue in favour; upon some disagreement he was driven from thence by the Duke; and the Norman fleet being at that time upon the coast, he united himself with the enemies of his country. They entered the mouth of the Loire, pillaged Nantes, carried their ravages over the fertile provinces of Anjou and Touraine, plundered or burnt the churches and monasteries, sacrificing to their barbarity the old and infirm, and carrying off all such of the inhabitants as could be of any use, even young children, whom they trained up to their own way of life; and they frequently disposed of, upon one coast, the booty they had thus torn from another.

This rapid success, for they were generally unmolested in their retreat, brought them, in more formidable numbers, the ensuing years. Under the conduct of Eric, one of their kings, with six hundred sail, they surprised Hamburgh, penetrated into Germany, and defeated the troops of Lewis in two engagements; from thence a large force was detached, under the command of Regnier, who navigated


navigated with his fleet the inviting stream of the Seine, again pillaged Rouen, surpris'd and burnt Paris, which, upon his appearance, had been deserted by the inhabitants; and the French Monarch, inactively encamped at St. Denis, ventured not to oppose them in the field; but, on the contrary, by the payment of seven hundred weight of silver, which purchased a temporary peace, they retired, and proceeded to the coasts of Flanders, Picardy, and Friezeland, committing the most horrid devastations.

A. D.  
845.

Surrounded by enemies, for Pepin was still in arms in Aquitaine, which province was equally ravaged by the Norman and Moorish pirates; Charles consented to give up to his nephew the greater part of those contested dominions, reserving to himself only the rights of homage and obedience. Taking advantage of this interval of peace, he turned his forces against the rebellious Bretons. Twice defeated by their Duke, he at length reduced him to the necessity of a reluctant submission.

The dominions of the Emperor, and the German Monarch, were not in a more tranquil state. Lewis, from the fatal battle of Fontenoy, had with difficulty repelled the Norman incursions, and preserved those tributary nations dependent upon him, in obedience to his government.

In Italy, Sergius the Second, the successor of Gregory the Fourth, had assumed the tiara, without awaiting the approbation of Lothaire:

A. D. Lewis, his son, was dismissed to Rome, to enquire  into the irregularity of his proceedings. The Holy Father thought proper to anticipate his arrival, by transmitting to him, upon his approach, the standard and the cross. The army of the Prince occupied the suburbs of the city, and committed some disorders; upon which, the gates were shut and carefully guarded by the wary Pontiff: but, to conciliate the favour of the Prince, he consecrated and crowned him King of Lombardy, permitting him at the same time to receive in the name of his father the oath of fidelity from the Roman people.

The Saracens, who had been called upon to the assistance of the contending Dukes of Beneventum, had established themselves at Bari, upon the Gulf of Venice, and kept the Italian provinces in a perpetual state of alarm; they advanced to Rome, plundered St. Peter's, then without the walls of that city, defeated the troops of the son of Lothaire, and obliged him to seek his safety within the ancient capital of the world.

The empire established by Charlemagne, thus convulsed, was rapidly hastening to its former state of anarchy and disorder; and the animosities of the Clergy and the Nobility in their struggle for superiority, was another evil, among the many that already prevailed. At a meeting held at Epernay, the dignitaries of the church assumed to themselves the most unbounded privileges: the Lords so effectually opposed them, that Charles ventured,



ventured, with their support, to dismiss the whole body from the assembly; and we may form some idea of the diminution of the royal influence, when, at the ensuing convention, of <sup>A. D.</sup> 847-855. <sup>847-855.</sup> Merfen on the Meuse, where the three brothers had met to consult on the general safety of the empire, they had not sufficient authority to condemn Giselbert, who, in despite of the resentment of the Emperor, had carried off his daughter, and consummated his espousal in the dominions of the French Monarch; on whom, although his vassal, he could not venture to inflict any punishment for this daring and presumptuous outrage. At the above convocation, besides many other regulations that proved ineffectual to remedy the disorders that prevailed, the inheritance to the throne was ascertained. It was decreed that the children of the reigning Kings should succeed, upon their father's death, to their dominions, at any age, and unopposed by their uncles; at the same time the independency as well as the power of the crown vassals, became considerably extended, by the concessions made them by their respective Sovereigns.

Perplexed, as were these Princes, by external enemies, as well as by the encroachments of their subjects, it is surprising that they should be so regardless of their real interests as to be continually disunited. The French empire could not have been so much weakened in the short

A. D. period that had elapsed from the death of Charlemagne, as not to have been fully sufficient to repel their hostile neighbours, had they but preserved a common consistency and union. They had scarcely separated at Merfen, with the most solemn assurances of a perfect concord, when we find Lothaire employing his usual subtlety, in an endeavour, however ineffectual, to detach Lewis from the interest of the French Monarch. A few years after we are surprised to find that Prince himself in arms against him, and soliciting the aid of Lothaire.

The ensuing years are but a disgusting detail of the same devastations, the same intrigues, and the same distresses. The Normans ravaged Aquitaine, pillaged and burnt Bourdeaux: another fleet of these invaders, ascending the Seine, penetrated into Neustria, and destroyed every city, town, village, and monastery, ten leagues above and below the city of Paris. The Bretons, under Herispée, the son of Nomenon, again assumed the sovereignty; and such was the weakness of the monarchy, that Charles the Bald was obliged to acknowledge his title, and forego all claim upon that province but homage and obedience.

The young Pepin, who had been driven from Aquitaine, and whose crown had been tendered to the French Monarch, was by his restless subjects recalled: Charles his brother, in arms in his cause,

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was seized by a Prince of the Gascons, and delivered A. D. to his uncle; at the ensuing assembly at Chartres he was shaved, and confined to the monastery of Corbie: the same fate awaited Pepin, who was immured in that of St. Medard at Soissons. The people of Aquitaine, disgusted with the wanton acts of severity exercised upon the adherents of that Prince, by Charles the Bald, transferred their crown to the son of Lewis the German. But their late Sovereign, escaping from his confinement, forced him to abandon his enterprize; and his father, perplexed by the Slavonians and Bohemians, was unable to render him any assistance.


Lothaire, under equal difficulties, harassed by the Saracens, who carried their devastations to the gates of Rome, nobly protected and valiantly defended by the sovereign Pontiff, Leo the Fourth, was alternately solicited for his support by the German and Gallic Monarchs: he promised, and he deceived them both; but a life conspicuous for ambition and treachery, now drew near its close. He was seized with a malady from which it was not possible that he could ever recover. The approach of death probably aroused a recollection and compunction for the various crimes which had marked his life, and induced him to exchange the purple of the Emperor for the cloak of the monk. He ordered himself to be conveyed to the monastery of Prum, where, clothed  
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A. D. 855. in the habit of the order, he renounced the splendour of the throne which he was sensible he could not long retain, for the gloomy solitude of the cloister. Before his final seclusion, he ascertained the respective dominions of his sons, and with his benediction gave them, the reverse of what he himself had practised,—a last lesson of morality and religion. His penitence, if it were sincere, was short, but rigid. He expired six days after, in the sixtieth year of his life, and the fifteenth of his accession to the empire, leaving behind him five children. His sons were, Lewis, who had been before associated in the Imperial dignity, and now succeeded to the Italian dominions; Lothaire, who became the sovereign of Austrasia, or Eastern France, which country from him took the name of Lorraine; and Charles, who, with Provence, Dauphiny, and Transjurane-Burgundy, assumed the title of King of Provence. His daughters were Hermenegarde and Bertha.

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This Prince had a multiplicity of vices, and not one virtue to rescue his name from merited opprobrium. Ambitious without conduct, perfidious without necessity, and violating, without shame, the most solemn engagements,—he was an ungrateful and disobedient son, a treacherous brother; and, without sufficient prudence to regulate his own, an unprincipled disturber of the dominions of others; and to this leading cause are to attributed all those troubles that convulsed the State,



State, and that precipitated to decay that sublime A. D. and illustrious fabric that had been raised by the transcendent genius of a Charlemagne. 

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Faithful to their engagements at Merfen, the uncles of the young Kings suffered them to take the quiet possession of their dominions; and the same intrigues, the same devastations, mark the ensuing years of the reign of Charles the Bald, with whom the Emperor was persuaded to enter into an alliance, Lothaire being, likewise, induced by Lewis the German to attach himself to his interest; and the empire of Charlemagne, already divided into five sovereignties, received the sixth in Charles, the son of the French Monarch, who was crowned the King of Aquitaine. Pepin, escaping from his confinement, and renouncing Christianity, joined the Normans in their devastations of that kingdom, and was again taken and shut up with his children in Senlis, where he did not long survive.

The disaffected Nobles of Neustria, whilst their Sovereign was engaged against the Normans, invited the German Monarch to accept of their allegiance; and, at an assembly of the Clergy held at Attigny, he was crowned, and Charles deposed, by the ungrateful Venelon, Archbishop of Sens, who, by his bounty, had been elevated to the station he enjoyed. In a Manifesto published by this Prince, he condescended feebly to complain



A. D. 858—61. plain that by the bishops he ought not to have been thus disgraced: as they had consecrated, it was but just, in the first place, to censure him, desirous as he had ever been, and still was, to submit to their paternal correction. We may venture to say that it was not so much the encroaching spirit of the Clergy, as the pusillanimity of the Prince, that led them to so extraordinary a sketch of power: but Charles, however willing he might have been to receive their correction, thought proper to pursue more decisive measures to repel the usurpation of Lewis, whom he advanced to meet as far as Chalons; but deserted by his army, he retired into Burgundy, from whence with the same levity he was recalled by his subjects; who, to augment their perfidy, conspired to deliver up his brother into his hands. Apprised of their designs, he escaped the danger, by a timely retreat into his own dominions.

It would be as useless as uninteresting to the reader, to give more than a slight sketch of the events of the ensuing years. The death of Charles, the King of Provence, enlarged the territories of his brothers: they divided his possessions. Baldwin, a nobleman, supported by the son of the French Monarch, had the audacity to carry off his daughter Judith, successively the widow of Ethelwolf and Ethelbald, Sovereigns of England; and, highly as it was resented by the King, he was, at the intercession of the Pope, induced

duced to pardon him, and afterwards bestow A. D.  
upon him the Earldom of Flanders.

The example of the sons of Lewis le Débonair appear to have had their full effect upon their descendants. Lewis and Charles, sons of the King of France, renounced their obedience, married contrary to his will, levied troops, and joined the enemies of their father, but were prevailed upon to return to their duty. Upon the death of the latter Prince, the former succeeded him in Aquitaine; while Lewis the German, not more fortunate in his domestic concerns, received the reward due to his early ingratitude in the rebellious conduct of his own children.

Independently of the civil wars, not only of the Princes, but of individuals, the country was depopulated by famine, pestilence, and by the sword of the Barbarian. Every year continued to be marked by the ravages of the Normans: they had destroyed numerous cities, churches, and monasteries; desolated the provinces with a fury nothing could withstand; seldom defeated, but always powerful. Induced sometimes by his necessities, the French Monarch purchased the assistance of one band of these pirates to dislodge another. Again uniting with the Bretons, we find these marauders defeated by Robert le Fort, a distinguished commander, whom Charles had been sufficiently fortunate to detach from the service of the King of Brittany, and whom he rewarded

A. D. rewarded with the dignity of Duke of France.  
861—69. For a while he checked their devastations; and, in one of their excursions, obtained a signal victory over them, as they were returning from the pillage of Mans with a considerable booty; but in the pursuit of their scattered forces, Robert, with Ranulph Duke of Aquitaine, was slain. Thus deprived of their valiant leaders, the enemy continued their horrid depredations, and seldom allowed a respite to the distressed inhabitants, but when their fury was suspended by considerable sums extorted from the already impoverished subjects of the kingdom.

In addition to these miseries, religious disputes convulsed the empire of the Carlovingians.—Lothaire had some years before repudiated Theutberge, upon a false allegation of adultery, to which she had proved her innocence by the trial of the ordeal; but, terrified by menaces, she confessed herself guilty, and retired into the dominions of Charles the Bald. The King of Lorraine, having obtained the consent of the Archbishops of Treves and Cologne, and others of the church, had his former marriage dissolved, and espoused his mistress Waldrade. Nicholas the First seized this favourable opportunity to extend his influence over the French Princes, and threatened Lothaire with excommunication. Convinced that his uncles would not neglect to possess themselves of his dominions upon such a pretence,

pretence, he sought to appease the Pontiff by recalling the Queen. The Bishops, dissatisfied at this interference, encouraged their Sovereign to resist the spiritual usurpation; and the favourite returned to court. Adrian the Second, following the footsteps of his predecessors, again threatened the King with the thunders of the Vatican; but he repaired to Rome, and so far conciliated the favour of the Pope, that he was suffered, with his attendants, to partake of the communion, after having solemnly declared that there no longer subsisted any intercourse with his mistress. The death of this Prince, of an epidemic fever, shortly after at Placentia, with some of the nobles who had partaken, with him, of the consecrated wafer, was attributed by the superstition of the times to the interposition of God, as a visible punishment for this sacramental delinquency.

A. D.  
869.

No sooner had the intelligence of his death been communicated to Charles the Bald, than, in defiance of the prior claims of the Emperor, Lewis the Second, he took immediate possession of Lorraine, and was crowned at Metz; while this latter Prince, occupied by the grievous irruptions of the Saracens, whose desolations of the once fertile provinces of Italy could be only exceeded by those of the Normans in France, was employed in the defence of his dominions. It was in vain that the Pope remonstrated against the injustice



A. D. injustice of the French Monarch, and sent his Legates to enforce an obedience to the See of Rome: the Bishops of the Gallican Church, with Hincmar, Archbishop of Rheims, that bold and turbulent prelate, answered in an equally imperious tone, "that France was not disposed to receive Sovereigns from his hands." But the claims of Lewis the German, who had a powerful army ready to second his remonstrances, were attended to; and he consented to participate with his brother, the dominions of Lothaire. To Charles was assigned that portion, comprehending Brabant, or Upper Lorraine, with the territories of Lyons, and the Viennois; and to Lewis, the countries between the Rhine, and the Meuse.

873. Carloman, the third son of the French Sovereign, had frequently rebelled, and had been as often pardoned; he again assembled a band of lawless followers, burnt and plundered the provinces of France, and committed the most execrable ravages. He was taken, and condemned, at an assembly held at Senlis, to a deprivation of sight: but having escaped from his confinement,—in this miserable state he repaired to his uncle the King of Germany, who bestowed upon him an abbey for his support, where he lived a few years longer, to lament the crimes that reduced him to this degradation.

The Normans had for some time established themselves at Angers, from whence they made frequent



frequent and successful incursions along the borders of the Loire: an interval of quiet induced Charles to make an effort to dislodge them from that advantageous post; and, with the assistance of Solomon, King of Brittany, who had been elevated to the throne upon the assassination of his kinsman, Herispée, at the altar, the French Monarch besieged them in the above city. Their fate must have been decisive, had not the weakness of the King permitted them to capitulate, and retire unmolested to commence new devastations, and obtain more ample contributions. Solomon was slain in the civil wars that desolated that province for the several following years, until Alan, a pretender to the crown, established himself in the sovereignty.

A. D.  
874.

The tranquillity of Italy being in some measure restored by the capture of Bari from the Saracens, after a siege of four years, the Emperor was enabled to prepare himself to attempt the recovery of the dominions of Lothaire; but his wordly pursuits were arrested in their course by the hand of death, and which closed his mortal career after a reign of twenty years of inquietude and warfare, equally persecuted and distressed by the restless dispositions of the Italians, as by the perpetual inroads of the Saracens. He was a brave and well-meaning prince, but without any brilliant acquirements, and left one daughter, Hermenegarde, who some time after was espoused

A. D. to Boson, the brother of Richilde, the second  
875. queen of Charles the Bald.

The Pope, John the Eighth, had altered the haughty tone he had assumed to the French Monarch, to whom he looked forward as a successor capable of protecting the Holy See; and secretly promised him his support to obtain the Imperial crown. Upon the death of Lewis, Charles hastened to Italy, deceived Carloman, the son of the King of Germany, who had also passed the Alps, to dispute the succession, and proceeded to Rome, where, on Christmas-day, the sovereign Pontiff, with the accustomed solemnity and splendour, placed the Imperial diadem upon his head. This costly honour, which he had already dearly purchased by considerable lucrative contributions, was received, by the pusillanimous descendant of Charlemagne, as a gift of the Holy See. “*We* “have judged him worthy of the Imperial sceptre,” said the Pope; “and *we* have raised him “to the august title of Emperor.” To conciliate the concurrence of the Nobility, who despised him for his concessions, and who were with difficulty prevailed upon to acknowledge his title, he extended their privileges: and thus, having established the arbitrary influence of the Papal power, the successors of St. Peter were disposed to consider themselves as the sole arbiters of the disputes of sovereigns, as well as the dispensers of kingdoms; and persuading Charles, that it  
would

would be proper to have a vicar of the Holy See resident in France, to superintend ecclesiastical affairs; this weak Prince consented; but the Gallican Church was not yet prepared for, and rejected with indignation this spiritual innovation. A. D.  
876.

Recalled to France by the success of the King of Germany, who had already penetrated as far as Attigny, he left Boson governor of Lombardy, and repassed the Alps. His return induced his brother to retire beyond the Rhine, with the intention of assembling more numerous forces; but Charles, by negotiation, endeavoured to procrastinate his measures; and the death of Lewis relieved him from a formidable opponent. Wise, moderate, and valiant, the liberality and justice of this Prince obtained him the affections of his subjects; and his steadiness and conduct far surpassed that of any of the descendants of Charlemagne.

The demise of Lewis was no sooner communicated to the restless and ambitious Charles, than, affecting to listen to the proposals, made by his sons, for a lasting peace, he prepared to surprise Lewis at Ardenac. Circumvented in his perfidious plans, he deservedly received a total overthrow at the village of Megen: his camp was pillaged; and, with the loss of his baggage and equipage, he disgracefully escaped, almost alone, to the monastery of St. Lambert, upon the Meuse. By this decisive victory, treachery

A. D. received its merited reward, and the young Princes retained the possession of their father's dominions. To Carloman devolved Bavaria, Sclavonia, Austria, Carinthia, Bohemia, and part of Hungary; to Lewis, Franconia, Saxony, Friesland, Thuringia, and the Lower Lorraine, with a few other towns on the Rhine; and to Charles, surnamed the Gros, the country of the Grisons, Switzerland, Suabia, Alsace, and the remainder of Lorraine.

During these internal commotions, the Normans were not idle: Charles had frequently bribed their neutrality, and was not perhaps aware that, while bent on conquest, he was himself a tributary to the Barbarians. The Pope, no longer the haughty prelate conferring a crown, but the humble suppliant, requested his assistance against the Saracens; who, uniting with the Dukes of Beneventum and Naples, threatened to annihilate the power of the Church. His solicitations were not unheeded: the Emperor convened, at Chiercy upon the Oise, the Clergy and Nobility; an assembly distinguished by the weakness of the Sovereign, and the encroachments of the Lords! and where, with a multitude of other articles, were new levies imposed, to purchase the forbearance of the Normans, with an impolitic decree permitting the great offices of the crown to become hereditary. Having established his son in the regency, he passed the mountains with his attendants:—at Pavia his conference with the Pope



Pope was disturbed by the unwelcome intelligence, that Carloman, with a numerous army, had invaded Lombardy. The sovereign Pontiff retired with celerity to Rome; and Charles, who had been deceived by the commanders of his army, who were to have followed him into Italy, took refuge at Mauriennè in the Alps. Carloman, equally alarmed by a false report of the Imperial army being on its way to oppose him, with the same precipitation retired into Bavaria. Shame and fatigue, with a recent indisposition, threw him into a fever; and, at the miserable village of Brios, in a peasant's cottage, the Emperor of the West resigned his breath, in the thirty-eighth year of his reign, the fifty-fourth of his age, and in the second from his accession to the Imperial dignity. His death has been attributed to the treachery of Zedicias, a Jewish physician, highly in his confidence, and, who, it is supposed, administered poison; but as the motive to such an attempt, which was never inquired into, has not been accounted for, we may doubt the truth of this assertion. The children of Ermentrude, his first queen, were five sons and three daughters: of the former, Lewis his successor only survived him.

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Had the fortune of this Prince depended upon his own personal exertions, his affairs would have been ruined at an early period of his reign; and he would have lost an empire which he had not integrity to govern with justice, understanding



A. D. to conciliate by favour, or consistency to protect by fortitude. Possessed of that kind of ambition that leads to daring and unprincipled enterprise,—he was entirely destitute of that political wisdom so necessary to a sovereign who wishes to improve the interests of his country, to promote the happiness of his subjects, and to deserve their confidence and love. Turbulent in the field, and inefficient in the cabinet, he was neither a successful warrior, nor conspicuous for the more solid acts of legislation. Rapacious, without strictly scanning the objects of his rapacity; and selfish in the accumulation of wealth, by whatever means obtained; his riches became reproachful, and he squandered his treasures with an indiscriminating hand, to effect the most mean and dishonourable purposes.

Inconstant in his favours, and capricious in his resentment, the first could not gain him friends, nor the last subdue his enemies. The unbounded authority which, at the commencement of his reign, he had suffered the Clergy to assume, he found it necessary to curtail; and, from a protector of the sacred character, he proportionably depressed the orders of the Church; sometimes opposing their influence, and at others capriciously availing himself of their support. With a firmness not natural to his disposition, he resisted the insolent encroachments of the Roman See; but the temptation of Imperial honours subdued his opposition; and he became, for the attainment of a crown

crown more brilliant than his own, a servile and submissive vassal to that Pontiff whose spiritual pre-eminence he had wished to abase. A. D.

The most powerful of the descendants of Charlemagne,—his extensive dominions rather served to precipitate the extinction of his line, than to preserve it from decay : fond of pomp and ostentation, with external splendour, his life was marked by domestic disgrace ; nor do we find, to oppose to the errors of his government, one incident to turn our censure into complacency, excepting his imputed love of letters, and the protection and encouragement which he gave to men of learning. In his liberality to literary characters, we trace with pleasure a descendant of his distinguished predecessor, and are willing to receive it as some palliation for his weakness and his vices. In other respects his reign was of deplorable consequence to his country ; nor could his subjects perceive, in his inclinations, or his actions, any particular object that could exceed his unbounded self-love. Despised by his people, whom he overwhelmed with taxes ; as by the great, whom he knew not how to attach to his person ; he has left a melancholy lesson for the conduct and speculation of succeeding Kings. May they profit from his example, and avoid those errors that lead to disgrace, and those politics that, applying to personal gratifications, disgrace the prince, and confirm the execration of his people !

A. D.

## CHAPTER XIV.

THE REIGNS OF LEWIS THE STAMMERER;—OF  
LEWIS AND CARLOMAN, KINGS OF FRANCE;—  
CARLOMAN, OF BAVARIA;—LEWIS, OF GER-  
MANY;—AND CHARLES THE GROS, OF ALLE-  
MAGNE.

The factions of the Court—Lewis the Stammerer crowned—  
Disturbances in Italy; and the Pope retires into France—  
Convokes a council at Troyes—Again crowns Lewis—  
Amicable conference at Marsen—Lewis prepares to chastise  
his rebellious subjects—His death and character—The suc-  
cession disputed by the King of Germany—Who receives  
Lorraine—Lewis and Carloman crowned—Boson assumes  
the regal title—The Normans—Death of the King of Ba-  
varia—His brothers share his dominions—The four Sove-  
reigns united in their councils—Success against Hugh, the  
son of Waldrade—Besiege Vienne—Charles the Gros, Em-  
peror—Victory over the Normans—Their horrid devasta-  
tions—Death of Lewis, King of Germany—And of Lewis,  
the King of France—Vienne surrenders—The Emperor's  
shameful treaty with the Normans—Death and character of  
Carloman—Charles the Gros unites the empire of Charle-  
magne—His treachery to Godfrey and to Hugo—Siege of  
Paris by the Normans—Valiant defence—The Emperor  
purchases their retreat—Returns to Germany—Deposed—  
His death and character.


HE who should cast his eye over the follow-  
ing pages, will be induced to observe, that, how-  
ever the genius and perseverance of one man  
may support or extend an empire, the splendid  
edifice will insensibly moulder away, if the  
general

general mass be not sustained by a corresponding energy in his successors, upon whose abilities its preservation from decay must ultimately depend. A. D.  
877.

The well-founded claim of Lewis to the crown, and which had been so generally acknowledged upon his establishment in the regency, was sufficient, we should have imagined, to secure to him the peaceable succession, without any danger of opposition: but, whether he was aware of the little dependance to be placed upon a turbulent and encroaching Nobility,—so soon as he was informed of the death of his father, he endeavoured to rivet their attachment to his person by a profuse distribution of lands, honours, and employments; and to the church, in particular, rich presentations and extended privileges. The arrival of the Empress, with the royal insignia, and the will of the late Emperor, gave considerable weight to the factious deliberations of the malcontents; and, after two months of cabal and confusion, Lewis, surnamed the Stammerer, from an impediment in his speech, was acknowledged their sovereign, and crowned at Compiègne, by Hincmar, Archbishop of Rheims.

While the French Court was thus convulsed by jealousy and opposition, the Papal Chair had been no less distressed by intestine divisions and foreign invasions. The Saracens, having advanced



A. D.  vanced to the gates of Rome, obliged John the Eighth to purchase their retreat by a considerable portion of that sum to which Charles the Bald had owed his elevation to the empire, and to engage in an annual tribute for the future safety of the episcopal city. Upon the demise of the Emperor, the Italian Nobility had espoused the cause of Carloman, the King of Bavaria. Lambert, Duke of Spoleto, aspiring himself to the Imperial diadem, proceeded to Rome, plundered the churches of the capital, and seized upon the person of the sacred Pontiff. These measures were ineffectual to subdue the inflexible spirit of the Holy Father, or to induce him to enter into his views; and Lambert, convinced of his firmness to resist his menaces, altered his tone, and received, in the name of the Bavarian Monarch, the oaths of fidelity from the Nobility of Rome.

Having retired from this capital, to secure his interest in Lombardy, the Pope took the advantage of his departure to effect a retreat to the city of Troyes: here he convoked a Council of the Gallican Church, wherein he forcibly dilated upon the outrages that had been committed upon his sacred character; and, secure from the resentment of his enemies, he fulminated his anathemas against the instigators of his persecutions. Among the many extraordinary canons enacted at this Council, the  
Bishops



Bishops appear to have considered themselves as exalted to the level of sovereign princes. A. D.  
“ The greatest monarchs in the world,” say they, “ shall honour bishops ; nor shall any  
“ secular power whatever presume to sit in our  
“ presence, without having first obtained our  
“ permission.”

The appearance of Lewis, hitherto detained by sickness from meeting the Pontiff, hastened to its close this extraordinary council. He again received the crown, and the royal unction, from the hands of the Holy Father ; but who could not be persuaded to suffer Adelaide, his queen, to participate in this important ceremony. He had married this princess to effect a reconciliation with his father, having at his express command divorced Ansgarde, the mother of his sons Lewis and Carloman, and who was still alive. It has been affirmed by many respectable historians, that he at the same time was invested with the Imperial honours ; but the silence of contemporary writers, corroborated with a charter granted three days afterwards, wherein he styles himself only King of France, justifies the assertion of others, that he was never elevated to the purple. He prevailed upon John to excommunicate several of his rebellious subjects, then in arms against him, particularly Bernard, Count of Septimania, and Hugh, the natural son of Lothaire, King of Lorraine ; but these  
spiritual

A.D. spiritual thunders, of so much efficacy at a later period, were, as yet, but little regarded. Complying as he had been to the wishes of the King, he found not the Gallican clergy alike disposed. When he requested that an act of the departed Emperor should be fulfilled, in which he affirmed, that the valuable abbeys of St. Denis and St. Germain Des-prez had been granted by that Prince to the Holy See, with indignation it was unanimously rejected; as it was justly alledged that no sovereign had the right, thus, to alienate the regal domains. As he could not enforce his demand, he was contented to depart in peace, exhorting the French Monarch to afford him speedy and efficient succours against his numerous enemies; and Boson was appointed to conduct him in safety to Pavia.

The Imperial crown was not however disposed of; and the right of the Popes to bestow it appears to have been at least acquiesced in. The wary Pontiff politically reserved it as a glittering bait, by which he flattered himself he might arouse the exertions of some powerful protector; and thus it remained undetermined, until the two competitors, Lewis, King of France, and Carloman, of Bavaria, were no more.

At a conference held at Mersen between the former Prince and the King of Germany, it was mutually consented to, that Lorraine should be held, as it had been originally divided by their fathers;

fathers; engaging finally to adjust, the ensuing A. D.  
year, all matters relative to the Italian territories, and the district of Provence: but the disorders occasioned by the rebellious Bernard, called off the attention of Lewis; and while he was preparing to chastise the insurgents, he had a return of his former complaints at Troyes; and being removed from thence to Compiègne, he breathed his last in that city, not without a suspicion of poison, in the thirty-fifth year of his age, and in the nineteenth month of his reign. Before he expired, he committed into the hands of Odo, Bishop of Beauvais, and Count Albuin, the ensigns of royalty, to be delivered to his eldest son Lewis; with a strict injunction to have him immediately consecrated. Besides the sons of Ansgarde, he left his second queen Adelaide pregnant; who, after his death, was delivered of a son, known in history by the name of Charles the Simple.

This Prince, distinguished by some writers by the name of Fainéant, appears not to have had justice done to his memory: for the irregularity of his conduct in the early part of his life, his youth and inexperience, with the pernicious example of the sons of Lewis the Débonair, might afford some palliation; nor was his reign sufficiently extended to have given opportunity to discover his capacity for government. The infirmities of constitution under which he  
laboured

A. D.

879.

laboured precluded exertion during the short space of time he swayed the sceptre; and if he were taken off by poison, it was a proof that his abilities were not so much beneath mediocrity as has been represented, through the medium of prejudice, or the want of inquiry.

With the concurrence of Boson, the governor of Provence, Hugh, the Abbot, a brother of Robert Le Fort—Odo and Albuin had fully determined to put in execution the commands of their late Sovereign; but the youthful years of his son was the pretended cause of an opposing party formed in favour of the King of Germany, at the head of which were Goslin, Abbot of St. Denis, and Conrad, Count of Paris, whose influence was too powerful to be unattended to by the adherents of the young Prince; and moderate as was the natural disposition of the German Monarch, the transfer of a crown was an offer too dazzling to be rejected, and to secure the possession of which, he had already advanced as far as Metz.

The partizans of the late King knew not how to disperse the storm which threatened to cloud the political horizon, but by making some concessions to the pretender to the crown; who, satisfied with the offer of that portion of Lorraine that had been held by Charles the Bald, and Lewis the Stammerer, retired, to the infinite chagrin



chagrin of the disaffected party, into his own dominions.

A. D.  


Their intrigues again renewed the ambition and the preparations of Lewis; and a speedy coronation of the legal Sovereign, appeared to their adherents to be the most effectual means of giving stability to their power: concessions too were necessary to retain the support of Boson, whose daughter had been betrothed to Carloman, and whose ambition led him to insist, contrary to the wishes of the late King, that both his sons should equally partake of his dominions. His influence prevailed; and the young Princes were crowned, and anointed, at the Abbey of Ferrieres, by Anségisus, Archbishop of Sens.—To Lewis were allotted Neustria, and a part of Burgundy; and to his brother, Aquitaine and Languedoc.


Upon their accession to the throne, they had the mortification to find that two considerable branches of their legal inheritance had been dismembered from the parent tree. Lorraine had been already ceded, to purchase the forbearance of the King of Germany; and Boson, the father of one Sovereign, the brother, and, by his marriage with Hermenegarde, the son of an Emperor, was no longer contented to remain in a subordinate rank. Aspiring to the regal dignity, he obtained the concurrence of the Nobility and the Bishops of Provence, and was crowned the King of Arles by Osteran, Archbishop of Vienne, at Mante, a  
royal



A. D. royal mansion in the Viennois ; thus wresting from the kingdom of France the valuable acquisition of Provence, the Lyonnois, Dauphiny, Savoy, Franche Comté, and a part of Burgundy.

The Sovereigns of the Carlovingian line, actuated by a better policy than had hitherto marked the conduct of the Princes of this race, entered into terms of perfect cordiality, and with mutual promises to exert themselves in a decisive manner against their natural enemies. The Normans, who still continued their predatory inroads, the young Kings were so fortunate, in a return from a conference with Charles the Gros, near the Lake of Geneva, to obtain a considerable victory over, at the river of Vienne ; and Lewis, King of Germany, attacked a considerable body of these freebooters, laden with plunder, in a descent upon the coast of Flanders, and left five thousand of them upon the field of battle ; a success which he dearly purchased, with the loss of his favourite and natural son Hugh, and by an advantage obtained in Saxony by another band of these Barbarians !

880. The death of Carloman, the Bavarian Monarch, without legitimate children, a prince respectable for his abilities, disturbed not the fraternal concord of his brothers ; they amicably settled the succession to his dominions. Lewis, taking possession of what he had held in Germany, bestowed Carinthia upon Arnold, a natural son

son of the late King, and resigned to Charles A. D.  
the Gros all pretensions to Lombardy, and to   
the Imperial crown.


The four Kings, anxious to restore tranquillity to their distracted dominions, appointed a general assembly at Gondreville, where they all attended in person, but the King of Germany, who had been detained by domestic misfortunes: uniting in politics and in strength, they agreed to co-operate in effectual measures against their enemies. The Kings of France having reduced and dispersed the rebellion of Hugh, the son of Waldrade, who had overrun the kingdom of Lorraine, were joined by Charles; and proceeded against Boson, whose usurpations had hitherto been reluctantly acquiesced in by the descendants of Charlemagne. Successful in the capture of Mâçon in Burgundy, they besieged Hermenegarde, the Queen of the new Sovereign, in Vienne.


The King of Allemagne, who had already secured the crown of Lombardy, left the brothers employed against that city, and repaired to Rome, to meet the Pontiff John the Eighth; and on Christmas-day the Imperial diadem, that had remained for three years suspended, doubtful upon whose head it should at last descend, was destined to grace the brows of him whose heart had so long panted for its brilliant possession.

The Normans had established themselves at

X

Ghent;

A. D. Ghent; had spread themselves from thence,  over the circumjacent countries; and, pursuing  
881. their destructive progress to the Somme,—Tournay, Courtras, Cambray, Amiens, and Arras, felt the dreadful effects of their savage devastations, being, with many other cities, either sacked or burnt, and the inhabitants wantonly put to the sword. To check their force, Lewis left his brother to pursue the siege; and, advancing with celerity, breathing revenge, overtook and engaged these destroyers at Saucour in Ponthieu; where, after a well-contested action, nine thousand of the enemy, with Guaramond their king, fell victims to his resentment. He conquered; but knew not how to make the most of victory: whether his forces were too much enfeebled to pursue his success, he paused from conquest, and allowed them to retire, and recommence their barbarous incursions. Another band, that the King of Germany endeavoured to dislodge from Nimeguen, reduced the palace to ashes, and reached their ships in safety with the spoils which they had collected. A third division of these Northern swarms, under Godefroy and Sigefroy, posted themselves upon the Meuse; from thence they extended, with horrid fury, their cruelties over Liege, Tongres, Cologn, Aix-la-Chapelle, and as far as the city of Treves. Actuated by despair, the peasantry in the district of the Ardennes, attempting to arrest their progress, were  
defeated

defeated with dreadful slaughter. Venelon, Archbishop of Metz, rashly opposing their numerous forces, was slain in the conflict; and Lewis, King of Germany, preparing his troops to revenge these desolating inroads, at an unfortunate period for his country, died at Franckfort in the vigour of his age, and in the sixth year of his reign, with the character of a just and a moderate prince. A. D. 

Upon the information of his death, the subjects of that part of Lorraine that had been held by Charles the Bald, in want of prompt support, tendered their allegiance to the Gallic Monarch: but he prudently refused an offer which might, possibly, have created domestic dissensions, at a time when the strength of the empire was so necessary to be united against the progress of their enemies; and so far was he from taking an advantage of the Emperor, then in Italy, that he generously spared a portion of his own troops to defend that part of his dominions.

With an intention to join the Duke of Brittany against the Normans, the young Monarch had proceeded to Tours, where, surprised by sickness, he was conveyed in a litter to St. Denis, and there expired, in the twenty-second year of his age, and in the fourth of his reign; in which short period he had given instances of valour and of prudence that would have done honour to a veteran king. It has been alledged, that his



A. D. 882. life was marked by irregularities, that laid the foundation of his early end; but it has also been acknowledged, as a contrast to this opinion, that he was as warmly beloved, as he was sincerely regretted.

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Carloman, upon the information of this event, left his army to continue the siege, and repaired to Chierfy, where, without opposition, he was unanimously proclaimed the successor to his brother's dominions. He had the satisfaction to receive, immediately after, the welcome intelligence of the capture of Vienne, after a gallant resistance of more than two years, by the manly exertions of Hermenegarde, who, with her daughter, was permitted to retire in safety to Autun; and the Norman invader, Hastings, with his band of pirates, was obliged, by the decisive tone assumed by the young Prince, to withdraw entirely from his dominions.

The Emperor, upon his return from Italy, collected at Worms a more formidable and numerous army than had for many years been assembled in the field of warfare, with the expectation of surprising the ravagers, encamped in the neighbourhood of Hussion upon the Meuse, before their desultory parties, detached for the purpose of pillage, could reach their camp. These measures were frustrated by treachery, and he found them prepared to combat his enterprise. Flattering himself however that he should be able to reduce them



them by famine, he closely besieged them in A. D. their entrenchments; but a most furious tempest, followed by a contagious disorder, equally afflicting to the contending parties, induced them to a mutual desire of accommodation: and, by a treaty as disgraceful as it was impolitic, the Emperor engaged to pay to Sigefroy a considerable sum of money, and to allow him to retain the possession of those territories he then held upon the Meuse; and to Godfroy, the other Norman leader, he gave a part of Friezeland, with permission to espouse Geselie, the daughter of Lothaire and Waldrade; and to her rebellious brother Hugh, then in alliance with them, the revenues of the Archbishopric of Metz. In return for those concessions, so prejudicial to the interest and dignity of the empire, they were to be baptized, and to engage to desist from any future molestation of his dominions during his reign. The French Monarch, highly exasperated that these dangerous encroachers should be thus established in the heart of the empire, demanded of the pusillanimous Charles a restitution of Lorraine; a cession which he found him by no means willing to attend to.

Profiting by the threatened disunion of the Princes, the Normans of the Meuse, forgetting their recent treaty, spread themselves over the province of Picardy, with their accustomed devastations, and besieged Rheims: with an inferior force the

**A. D.** young King defeated, and obliged them to retreat; but soon returning with new swarms, he was, notwithstanding his activity and perseverance, obliged to purchase their forbearance through the medium of pecuniary compensation.

884. In the ensuing year, this amiable Prince was wounded by a boar, as he was pursuing the pleasures of the chase; but it is asserted by the annalist of Metz, that the accident proceeded from one of his attendants, whose spear unfortunately missed his aim, and struck the King, who, with a singular magnanimity, that his life might not be subject to danger, affirmed, that to the beast was to be imputed his approaching end.

The character of this young Monarch not only challenges our regard, but our affection: his intrepidity had been discovered upon many occasions; and with a dauntless courage he united the more popular qualities of mildness and virtue. Had his life been longer spared, he would probably have restored the declining empire of Charlemagne to its pristine lustre, and have left it, with a prospect of permanency, to those who might have succeeded him.

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Thus, in the short space of seven years, were removed from the pre-eminence of station, seven Sovereigns of this line. The extreme youth of  
Charles

Charles the son of Adelaide, precluded him from <sup>A. D.</sup> all hope of the succession; and the preparations of the Normans induced the Nobility to a hasty concurrence in an offer of the crown to the Emperor. At Gondreville, near Toul, he received the oaths of his new subjects, and became, by this accession of dominion, one of the most powerful monarchs, in extent of territory, since the reign of Lewis the Débonair. His abilities, which had never been greatly distinguished, were early discovered to be unfit for the conduct of so complicated a government as the one of which he had now become the possessor. With the title of Emperor and King of Italy, he had actually no real power beyond the Alps; all was confusion, tumult, and civil warfare, in that country; and the Papal authority was as little estimated by a factious Nobility, as was the Imperial power.

The Normans were no sooner apprised of the death of Carloman, than they united with Hugh, in his renewed claims upon Lorraine; while the Emperor, directed by a policy as weak as it was wicked, found the means to circumvent both parties. Induced by his ministers to a conference, in the island of Bétou on the Rhine, Godfrey, the Norman chief, fell a victim to his credulity, and was treacherously assassinated with his attendants; his ally, alike deceived, repairing to Gondreville, upon the faith of

A. D. Charles, was seized, deprived of sight, and confined in the abbey of St. Gal.

885.

Influenced by these perfidious acts, the resentment of his enemies knew no bounds ; the destruction of their arms corresponded with the fatal fury of their passions. Under their leader Sigefroy they assembled their detached parties from every part of the kingdom, passed the Somme, desolated the country as far as Pontoise, burnt and plundered that city, and entering the Seine with their accumulated forces, in seven hundred small vessels, prepared to attack the city of Paris, then an inconsiderable town, comprising only that part which now occupies the island in the river, and which was connected to the opposite banks by two wooden bridges. This siege, memorable for the spirited exertions of the contending parties, continued nearly two years to baffle the utmost efforts of the besiegers ; every warlike engine that was at that time known was employed for the offence, or in the defence, of the place ; the most desperate acts of valour were performed on both sides. The Parisians had not only to combat a determined enemy, but the concomitant evils of famine and contagion ; while the enemy, with the ample range of the circumjacent country, were able to provide their camp with every necessary.

The defence was directed by the admirable conduct of Eudes, Count of Paris, as was the internal

ternal regulation of the city by Gofelin, Abbot of St. Denis, who not only attended to the department allotted him, but gallantly mounted the walls every day, and, as much by his personal valour as by his exhortations, animated the garriſon to a vigorous reſiſtance. Ebbles, his nephew, diſtinguiſhed for his prodigious ſtrength, and Robert, brother of Eudes, ably co-operated with their valiant leader. While they were thus nobly engaged in the preſervation of all that is dear to man, their country, liberty, families, and their lives, their Sovereign remained in tranquillity at Franckfort, ſatiſfied with affording them from time to time a ſcanty and precarious ſupport. Henry, Count of Saxony, twice penetrated into the town, with a convoy of proviſions and a few troops, when they were nearly reduced to the laſt extremities; but in his ſecond attempt he ſuffered himſelf in his retreat to be ſurpriſed and ſlain.

The prayers and entreaties of the beſieged, with this recent miſfortune, had at length ſome effect upon the mind of Charles; and when hopeleſs to ſupport any longer ſo unequal a conteſt, the Pariſians had the ſatiſfaction of ſeeing him encamped within ſight of the town, upon the hills of Montmartre, with ſo numerous a force as would have enabled him, with the leaſt exertion, to have ſurrounded the beſiegers; but he choſe rather to compromiſe than to conquer, and another ignominious treaty marked the  
weakneſs



A. D. weakness of his reign. In consideration of a pecuniary consideration, the Normans engaged to retire; but upon the condition, that they should be permitted to take up their winter-quarters in Burgundy, until that compensation could be procured. Baffled in a treacherous attempt to surprize the town, after they had ratified this disgraceful treaty, they left the vicinity of Paris for their destined allotment, sweeping the country, as they passed on, of cattle and every thing moveable, in their usual mode of devastation.

Weak in body, and disturbed in mind, the Emperor returned to Franckfort, equally despised by the subjects of his French, as of his German, dominions: nor was the opinion of the public increased by the repudiation and confinement of the Empress Rachael, whom he accused of infidelity to his bed with Ludard, his favourite Minister, to whom he had long delegated the whole sovereign authority, and who was the only man of abilities about his person. But the understanding of Charles had been for some time past disarranged; and his infirmity became now so evident, that the German Nobles, convinced how unequal he was to the cares of government, with a general concurrence deposed him, and elevated to their crown Arnold, a natural son of Carloman, the late King of Bavaria. Incapable, as he certainly was, of the administration of his dominions, his melancholy  
privation

privation demanded some degree of personal attention. In the space of three days he was abandoned by all the world; left without a single domestic to administer to his weakness, or the means to procure for himself the necessaries of life; and must have perished, merely for want of the common sustentations of nature, had it not been for the relief afforded him by Lutbert, Archbishop of Mentz, who literally gave him bread! until the supplications of a son of the degraded Emperor induced Arnold to bestow a small district, what had been so recently his own, to furnish him with a daily support. What a libel is this upon human nature, and what an awful lesson does it hold out to kings! We have beheld in this Prince, a melancholy instance of worldly ingratitude! a prince, from the summit of human splendour, reduced to the most humiliating state of human misery; from a palace in an Imperial city, driven forth a wretched outcast, deprived of reason, unpitied, unnoticed! And if such be his degradation, who had no actual vice, what then ought those tyrants to expect in the hour of misfortune, whose reigns have been marked by oppression, tyranny, and blood? In this state of humiliating poverty, and under the dreadful affection of mental incapacity, he was not doomed to linger long; his insulted feelings still triumphed over his wreck of thought, and his speedy dissolution evinced that every avenue of reason was not closed. He died, a martyr to his sufferings,

A. D. 888. sufferings, on the 14th of January, and was buried at the monastery of Richenaw, in the lake of Constance, leaving an illegitimate son, Bernard.

A weak, but not a vicious, prince,—devout, to a fault, and fond of retirement,—Charles was rather calculated for a private, than for a public life: too easily imposed upon, he suffered his name to sanctify acts of oppression and treachery, contrary to his natural love of justice. Subject to natural infirmities from his early infancy, his understanding seemed to decline with his years; but his deprivation of reason could not excuse the cruel neglect that followed his deposition, nor the errors of his government palliate the inhumanity of his successor.

## CHAPTER XV.

THE REIGNS OF EUDES, CHARLES THE SIMPLE,  
ROBERT, AND RODOLPH.

Pretenders to the throne—Eudes crowned—Secures Arnold in his interest—Distracted state of Italy—The Normans—Charles the Simple crowned—Divides the kingdom with Eudes—Arnold obtains the Imperial crown—His death—With that of Eudes—Charles cedes Neustria to Rollo—The line of Charlemagne extinct in Germany and Italy—Robert elevated to the throne—Is slain in an engagement against Charles—Who is defeated—Rodolph raised to the throne—Charles is treacherously

cherously deceived and confined—Vigorous government of A. D.

the new Sovereign—Perfidy of Herbert to his royal prisoner—

The death and character of Charles—The administration 888—892

of Rodolph—Private wars—Death and character of

Rodolph.

**T**HE stream deduced from Pepin of Heristal increased in its progress, and descended with accumulation upon Charlemagne; from thence it became more and more contracted, until, refusing to fertilise, it wasted and sunk into oblivion. Whether the incapacity and personal defects of this line of Princes be attributed to physical, or referred to artificial causes, it would be in vain to inquire; but the history of their lives is a sufficient comment upon the weakness of their government; and, from the reign of Charles the Bald, may be distinctly observed the rapidity with which this race hastened to its final extinction.

The death of the Emperor, Charles the Gros, left his dominions a prey to the fury of ambition: his French subjects had, it is true, no part in his misfortunes; but they neither esteemed his person, nor obeyed his commands: his imbecility, and the recent treaty so disgracefully made, had entirely lost him their affections; nor was it natural to suppose they would make any exertion in his favour. But the information of his decease, harassed as they were by the Normans,



A. D. mans, threw the Nobility, all equally jealous of each other, and grasping at sovereign power; into a temporary alarm.

Charles, the son of Lewis the Stammerer, the only direct and legal heir to the empire, was still a child; and numerous were the pretenders to those dominions, to which, if hereditary right be allowed, he had the only claim. The most conspicuous of the competitors to the crown of France were, Berenger, Duke of Friuli,—Guy, Duke of Spoleto,—who were both the descendants of Charlemagne, by the female side; Arnold, an illegitimate branch, whose party was both numerous and powerful, and who had already been acknowledged by the German Nobility; Lewis, the son of Boson; and Rodolph, the son of Conrad, the late Count of Paris. But while these pretenders were preparing to ascertain their respective claims, the Neustrians, averse to the reception of a stranger, and in too critical a situation to continue long as they then were, without the appearance of a form of government, were involuntarily led to elevate to the throne Eudes, Count of Anjou and Duke of Burgundy, a son of the illustrious Robert le Fort, whose recent services in the gallant defence of Paris, with his mental and personal qualifications, were deserving of the exaltation to which he was raised. In a parliament assembled at Compiègne, he was recognized as their sovereign, solemnly invested with



with the regal dignity, and anointed at Sens A. D.  
by Gautier, the Archbishop of that diocese.

The first care of the new Sovereign was to attach to his interest the most powerful of his opponents : he repaired to Worms, and in person assured Arnold, that, could his elevation be injurious to the interest of the kingdom of France, he was willing to desist from his pretensions ; nor would he, without his consent, bear the marks of royalty. This deference flattered the German Monarch, and their interview terminated in a treaty to their mutual satisfaction.

Italy, reduced almost to a desert by the Saracens, and the opposition of interests among the numerous independent Nobility, was also divided by the factions of the Dukes of Friuli and Spoleto : the former had sufficient influence to obtain the crown of Lombardy ; and the latter proceeded to Rome, and received from the Pontiff, Formosus, the Imperial diadem : advancing as far as Langres, the Bishop of that diocese anointed him also King of Neustria ; but perceiving that the party of Eudes was too powerful to expect any permanent establishment in that country, he hastily repassed the Alps, and soon after defeated his rival, Berenger, in two engagements, rendered memorable by the dreadful slaughter of their forces.

Mean while Eudes shewed himself worthy of the elevation to which he had aspired. The Normans, those turbulent and cruel persecutors  
of

A. D. of his country, were, at his accession, desolating the province of Aquitaine, and the country on both sides of the Marne and the Aisne. With only a thousand horse he surprised nineteen thousand of these freebooters in a wood near Montfaucon, and attacked them with so much vigour and address, that few of them escaped from the field of battle. Another party, penetrating into Brittany, were alike unsuccessful. But these defeats availed but little against the prodigious swarms of these depredators, whose numbers accumulated as fast as they could be destroyed.

Whilst the arms of Eudes were directed towards Ranulph, Duke of Aquitaine, who had caused himself to be crowned King of that country, and whom he obliged to forego the title he had assumed,—Meaux, Troyés, Toul, and Verdun, fell a prey to their vindictive rage. Twice was Paris again besieged, and twice were the assailants repulsed ; no part of the kingdom escaped their ravages. With eighty thousand men they again entered the Meuse, posted themselves in the marshy country about Aix-la-Chapelle, and defeated, in two engagements, the armies of the King of Germany. Exasperated at his disgrace, the active Arnold passed the Rhine with a prodigious force, and attacked them in their encampments, upon the Dyle in Brabant, with so much fury and perseverance, that scarcely  
an

an individual escaped from the vengeance of his sword.


A. D.

892.

While Eudes was employed in an effectual endeavour to repel the enemies of his country, as in an attempt to regulate and suppress the prevailing disorders of the State, a confederacy was forming to restore to the crown its lawful heir. His endeavours to restrain the unbounded independency of the great Lords, augmented the number of his opponents; nor does it appear, from their past or subsequent conduct, that any other motive than interest had actuated their wishes for a change. Count Valgaire was the first who openly declared for Charles, and the first who was doomed to become the victim of the resentment of Eudes: he was besieged in Laon; the city was taken by assault; and the Count was beheaded. But this severity, so far from producing the effects he had expected, rather stimulated the indignation of the Nobility. Herbert, Count of Vermandois, and Pepin of Senlis, descendants of Bernard, King of Italy, with Ebles, the nephew of the valiant Goselin, assembled a powerful army in behalf of the young Prince; and he was crowned by Foulques, Archbishop of Rheims, in that city. Arnold apparently espoused his cause; but so feeble were his exertions, that the German troops sent to his assistance withdrew themselves upon the approach of his rival; and the new Sovereign retired into

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Burgundy,

 A. D. Burgundy, slenderly attended, and meanly abandoned by those who had invited him to accept of this precarious elevation.

During the space of four years the unfortunate kingdom of France was convulsed by the opposing factions of the partisans of the two Kings. The threats of Charles to enter into an alliance with the Normans, at length induced Eudes to listen to terms of accommodation; those few who preferred the happiness of their fellow-creatures to the mercenary considerations of ambition and interest, undertook, by their mediations, to heal the bleeding wounds of their country. A division was consented to; and those territories lying between the Seine and the Pyrenees were to be retained by the latter Prince, and which he submitted to hold as a fief of the crown; while to Charles was allotted the possession of all that country extending from the Seine to the Meuse.

The crafty Arnold, alternately the friend and the deceiver of both parties, found sufficient employment in his own dominions, against the rebellious Duke of Moravia, whom, with the assistance of the Dukes of Hungary and Poland, he compelled to acknowledge his authority: from thence directing his attention towards Italy, a country to which he conceived his pretensions superior to those of the present possessors, he passed the Alps, and obliged Guy, Duke of Spoleto, to retreat from Lombardy, and to seek an asylum  
in



in his capital. Without pursuing his good fortune, he abandoned his conquests, and suddenly turned his arms against Rodolph, who had assumed the title of King of Burgundy Transjurane, in the hope of surprizing him before he had been prepared for his approach; but the vigilance of the new Sovereign was not so easily to be circumvented; and the German Monarch, having ineffectually endeavoured to obtain some advantages in that country, gave up the contest, and repaired to a Diet assembled at Worms, which established Zuntibold, his second son, King of Lorraine.

A. D.  
896

The attainment of the Imperial honours, the favourite object of the ambition of Arnold, was not yet gratified. Secretly invited by Formosus, the sovereign Pontiff, to rescue him from the outrages committed upon his person by the contending potentates of Italy, he repaired to Rome, entered the city, more as an enemy than as a friend, delivered the Pope from his persecutors, but indiscriminately gave up to the sword a considerable number of the inhabitants of either faction. Crowned, by the Holy Father, the Emperor of the West, he left Farold governor of the city, and besieged, in the castle of Fermo, Agiltrude, the widow of Guy, Duke of Spoleto, whose son Lambert had before compelled the Pope to acknowledge his title to the contested dignity. Baffled in his attempt by a deleterious beverage, administered at the instigation of that Princess, Arnold was removed into Bavaria, in so



A. D. debilitated a condition, that he never recovered the baneful effects of the fatal potion; although he some time after made another unsuccessful attempt in Italy; but was obliged, by Berenger, to retire into Germany. He survived not his attainment of the purple more than three years, and died in a most loathsome state of humiliation and misery. He was the last of the Carolingian line who wore the Imperial diadem on this side of the Alps; and left two sons;—Lewis, his successor in his German dominions, also styled King of the Romans, then only seven years of age; and Zuntibold, a natural son, the Sovereign of Lorraine.

The treaty of division that had been entered into by the Kings of France, was by no means of sufficient efficacy to preserve internal quiet; their animosities were not allayed, nor was it probable they could be, when encouraged, for their own particular ends, by their respective partisans. Death at length relieved Charles from his able competitor, in his fortieth year, after a troublesome reign of nearly ten, wherein he gave proofs of talents for war and government, which the unfortunate aspect of the times prevented him from exerting as he probably would have done, had his life been protracted to a more lengthened period. He left a son, who was proclaimed his successor upon his demise, but who, in a few days, followed him to the grave; and  
Robert,

Robert, his brother, became the possessor of his patrimonial territories.

A. D.

898—912

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Charles, who had been so long the sport of fortune, was now unanimously recognized as the King of France; he had attained his twentieth year; but his abilities were not equal to the arduous task of government, and his weakness rather increased than diminished the disorders that prevailed. Nor was France in itself what it had been at a period not very remote. Lorraine was held by the son of the late Emperor; Burgundy Transjurane, comprehending Savoy, and a part of Switzerland, had been established by Rodolph into a kingdom. Lewis, the son of Boson, with the title of King, held those fine provinces that had been dismembered by his father: and the Nobles, the absolute sovereigns in their own domains, carried their private contentions to the most dreadful lengths, the Monarch presuming not to interfere in the termination of their disputes.

Soon after the death of Eudes, Charles had an opportunity of re-annexing Lorraine to his crown: the subjects of that kingdom, dissatisfied with Zuntibold, made him a tender of their allegiance; but too indolent to profit by their wishes, he renounced his pretensions for a trifling recompence, after having gained considerable advantages over the son of Arnold.

A. D.

The Normans, who had hitherto been wholly led by the desire of plunder, were now commanded by a chief whose ambition extended to more exalted views than to be distinguished as the leader of a band of pirates. Driven from his country by domestic faction, Rollo, the most illustrious, both by birth and valour, of the Northern warriors, attached to his standard a vast body of his countrymen, with the evident intention of making a permanent settlement in France. Twice he had gained a fruitless victory upon the English coast, and spread terror over the maritime provinces of Europe. Having rendered a considerable part of Friezland tributary to his arms, he entered Neustria, and, taking possession of Rouen, rebuilt the walls, and established that city as his place of general resort. From hence his vessels ravaged, with impunity, the English and the Gallic shores.

The misery and intercessions of his subjects at length induced the French Monarch to attempt, by accommodation, to restrain the depredations of these destructive invaders, which no force that could be raised by his impoverished kingdom, would have been able to repel. Franco, Archbishop of Rouen, had obtained some influence over the mind of Rollo; and by his persuasion this illustrious chief was induced to suspend his hostilities, and consent to a temporary truce, as the foundation of a permanent peace; but Charles, directed by other councils,  
and

and forgetting the weakness of his arms, ventured to infringe the recent convention. The exasperated Norman recommenced his devastations with such evident marks of resentment, as threatened the kingdom with destruction; and constrained the reluctant advisers of the King to renew the negotiations for a speedy reconciliation.

To the victorious Rollo, as the basis of future harmony, the province of Neustria was to be surrendered; which, to preserve an appearance of honourable pretence, he was to receive as the portion of Gefilie, the daughter of Charles, whom he engaged to espouse, and pledged himself with his compatriots to embrace the faith of his new allies. Having consulted his warriors, they readily acceded to the terms proposed: but, as the province which was to be given up had been laid waste by his depredatory inroads, he required that Brittany should likewise be conceded, to subsist his followers until cultivation and peace should restore the lands to their natural abundance. It was in vain to refuse that, of which he had the power to compel the acquiescence; and in return for this immense dismemberment of the once flourishing kingdom of France, he consented to hold this valuable gift as a fief of the Crown. This disgraceful, yet necessary treaty, was confirmed at St. Clair upon the Epte; but the proud Norman, disdain-  
Y 4  
quired

**A. D.** quired from a vassal to his superior, deputed to an attendant, a service which his haughty spirit indignantly rejected.

Thus the acknowledged Sovereign of one of the finest provinces in France, his new territory soon sunk its ancient name for that of Normandy, in honour of its new inhabitants: the successful Prince fixed his capital at Rouen, and, faithful to his engagement, the next year was baptized, and received the name of Robert, from the brother of Eudes, who answered for him at the fount. Deserving of his good fortune, he resigned the turbulence of arms for the tranquillity of peace; he established a regular government, and, no less distinguished as a warrior than a politician, enacted most excellent laws, rebuilt the cities and the churches, promoted agriculture, and became as remarkable for the severity of his justice, as for the wisdom of his institutions.

Encouraged by the security enjoyed by his subjects under his protection, the better kind of his countrymen resorted to his new principality; and, before his death, he had the satisfaction to see his dominions, from a depopulated desert, converted into a flourishing kingdom, filled with industrious inhabitants, regular in their manners, and obedient to the laws; and the only stain that has been left upon the memory of this great Prince, has been the cruelty with which he has been represented to have treated the unfortunate Gefilie.

In



In the progress of time, the Normans and the French, no longer enemies, became blended in one common mass; and so exalted was the opinion entertained by his subjects of his military and political virtues, that after his death they hung upon his memory with a pleasing remembrance, and made it a subject of their oblations; and for many years the mention of his name was alone sufficient to the officers of justice, to hasten to put a stop to any sudden tumult. A. D.


While these affairs were transacting in France, the Carlovingian line became extinct in Germany. Lewis the Fourth, the successor of Arnold, had been entrusted to a regency upon his father's death: the loose and disorderly manners of the King of Lorraine had repeatedly provoked the resentment of his subjects; they had, as we have before observed, revolted, and offered their crown to Charles; and they now put themselves under the protection of the German Monarch. Zuntibold, in a rash attempt against the forces of his brother, was defeated and slain in a bloody engagement upon the Meuse; and his possessions again became annexed to Germany. The short reign of Lewis was a continued scene of war and tumult. The Hungarians, and the Normans, equally ravaged his dominions; and, from a life prolonged but to his twentieth year, there could have been but little opportunity for the display of talents either for government or arms.

Not

A. D. Not having left any children, Charles became the natural heir to the succession; but so ill could he protect his own kingdom, that he was not in a situation to avail himself of his claim. The German Nobility assembled at Worms, assumed to themselves the right of electing a sovereign to their vacant throne; and Conrad, Count of Franconia, became the object of their choice.

The male line of the illustrious Charlemagne was thus extinct in Germany, and in the trifling lapse of one hundred and twelve years since he had been invested with the Imperial honours of the purple:—an empire which promised, from the number of his children and their collateral descendants, a more lengthened as a more honourable and splendid duration!

In Italy, the Duke of Friuli had, upon the retreat of the Emperor Arnold, been again crowned King of Lombardy; and his rival, Lambert, the son of Guy, Duke of Spoleto, had been invested with the Imperial honours. Upon the death of the latter Prince, Berengerius repaired to Rome, and compelled the Pontiff to place the diadem upon his head; but he had not long enjoyed his elevation, before Lewis, King of Arles, passed the Alps, to dispute his title. Lewis being likewise raised to the contested honour by Benedict the Fourth, he was surprised some time after by his opponent, deprived of his sight; and the Duke of Friuli had the satisfaction  
of

of bearing the lofty title without a rival; until his cruelties becoming no longer supportable, he was assassinated by his domestics, and was the last of the royal race of Charlemagne that reigned in Italy. A. D. 

Having thus slightly touched upon the fate of the descendants of that Monarch in Germany, and beyond the Alps, the subject of our future researches will be more confined to the French kingdom, than the connexion between those Princes has hitherto allowed. The subjects of Lorraine; after the death of Lewis the Fourth, of Germany, more inclined to the Carlovingian line, tendered their oaths of fealty to Charles the Simple; but this acquisition of territory gave him not any additional power: he found that country, like his immediate dominions, alike divided among a turbulent Nobility; nor was he long doomed to retain the possession of any sovereignty. Robert, the brother of Eudes, as well by his alliances as by his extensive domains the most powerful nobleman of the realm, and whose family had already tasted of the sweets of royalty, was himself seduced to aspire to the same elevated station. The confidence reposed by the King in Hagamon, a man of talents, but of mean birth, was the pretext for his dissatisfaction, and for that of his adherents. Having secretly, but ineffectually, endeavoured to prevail upon Richard, Duke of Burgundy, and William, the Sovereign

A. D. Sovereign of Normandy, to support his pretensions, their inflexibility for a while suspended his ambitious purposes; but his partisans becoming sufficiently numerous to support his intended usurpation, in an assembly held at Soissons, this presumptuous vassal, with his chief abettors, renounced, in the presence of their Sovereign, their allegiance to his government. The consent of Charles to the removal of his favourite, brought about a temporary accommodation, which procrastinated, for a short time, his fate, while it strengthened the resources of his opponent. The imprudent recall of Hagamon was again made the pretence for rebellion: the French Monarch, abandoned by his army, and forced to retire from Laon, sought his safety in a retreat into Aquitaine; and his rival, conducted in triumph to Rheims, was crowned and anointed King of France.

With the assistance of William, Count of Auvergne, and Raymond, Count of Thoulouse, the fugitive Prince raised a powerful army, and advanced to meet the usurper of his crown, near Soissons. A desperate engagement ensued; and Robert was supposed to have fallen by the arm of his royal antagonist: but unavailing was his ardour;—the loss of their leader was ably supplied by the active valour of Hugh, his son, who, re-animating his flying squadrons, completely routed and dispersed the forces of the unfortunate



fortunate Monarch. Charles attempted in vain to join the Duke of Normandy, who had promised him his assistance; but the vigilance of his enemies prevented him from profiting by the friendly intentions of his ally: he retired again beyond the Meuse, to lament the inconstancy of fortune, and with the feeble expectation of assembling the few remaining partisans who might yet feel some commiseration for his degraded state. So soon as his retreat was ascertained, the rebellious faction made a tender of the crown to the son of Robert; but he refused the splendid honour in favour of Rodolph, Duke of Burgundy, who had espoused his sister Emma, and who received the royal unction from Gautier, Archbishop of Sens. A. D.

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The perfidy of Herbert, Count of Vermandois, secured to the usurper the permanency of his elevation: forgetting that to the same noble stock was to be referred his illustrious origin, he persuaded the royal fugitive to confide his person into his hands, with the solemn assurance of animating his adherents to effect his restoration. Doubtful of the sincerity of those offers, it was with reluctance that Charles ventured to meet him at St. Quintin; but having gained by exterior marks of respect his confidence, he prevailed upon him to dismiss his attendants; and the unhappy Prince fell the victim to his credulity. He was removed in the night to Château-Thierry, a well-fortified castle, in the domains of the traitor,




A. D. 923. traitor, who repaired to the court of Rodolph, to receive a reward for the active and treacherous part he had taken in his support. Egiva, the queen, with her young son, Lewis, fled to the court of her father Edward, King of England; and the degraded Monarch dragged on a miserable existence in unavailing regret, for the incautious reliance which had betrayed him to the arts of the perfidious Herbert.

The reign of Rodolph was a series of seditions, revolts, and new misfortunes to the divided kingdom. He wanted not either talents for the cabinet, or intrepidity for the field; but to have restored a peaceful government to the distracted country, would have required more than human abilities. He restrained the independent Nobles; distinguished himself against new tribes of Normans; baffled the attempts of William, Duke of Normandy, and Henry the Fowler, the successor of Conrad, King of Germany, who had appeared willing to support the interests of the captive Prince: but the end proposed by the latter Sovereign was effected in the success of his arms in Lorraine, which he detached from the French government; and he in consequence made not any further effort in behalf of the degraded Charles. Having concluded a treaty for a suspension of hostilities with Henry, Rodolph directed his forces against the Duke of Aquitaine, who, warmly attached to his lawful Sovereign, refused to acknowledge the title of one whom he  
considered

considered as the usurper of his rights ; but his power was not equal to his loyalty, and he was compelled, by his more formidable antagonist, to preserve his dominions, by taking the accustomed oaths of homage and obedience. A. D.

These successes were ineffectual to secure tranquillity to the government of Rodolph, who was no sooner relieved from one enemy, than he was assailed by others. New swarms of Normans fell upon the provinces of Burgundy, Picardy, and Artois : the Duke of Aquitaine, taking advantage of their inroads, again asserted an independency ; and the Hungarians, a new and ferocious enemy, penetrating through Lorraine, threatened the destruction of Champagne. Whether by force or negotiation, his activity and address overcame the difficulties by which he was surrounded, and still preserved the crown he had attained ; but from Herbert, the Count of Vermandois, as perfidious as he was ambitious, he had more to fear. Liberally rewarded for his treachery to his Sovereign, by the rich diocese of Rheims, bestowed upon an infant son ; his insatiable thirst of power led him to consider no compensation adequate to his services ; and the city and district of Laon became the next object of his wishes : but the disappointment of his hopes in its surrender to another adherent of Rodolph, induced him to attempt the surprise of the town : failing in this enterprise, he drew his royal prisoner.

A. D.  soner from his confinement, renewed his oaths of allegiance, and flattered him with the seductive hopes of returning liberty. The King of Germany, with the son of Robert, and the Duke of Normandy, entered into his views of a restoration. Charles was conveyed to Eu, received the homage of the latter Prince, and speedily found himself at the head of a force sufficiently numerous to meet his antagonist in the field. Thus prepared to contest his rights, the contending parties met upon the Oise; but Rodolph, convinced of the instability of the professions of Herbert, prevailed upon Hugh to abandon the cause he had espoused, and become his negotiator with the Count of Vermandois.

The contested city was the price of his new perfidy; and the unhappy Prince, doomed to be the victim of his ambitious subjects, was again sacrificed to their interested views. Confined at Peronne, his miseries, heightened by his recent prospects of liberty, and the resumption of the crown, were not of long continuance; a few months put a period to his sufferings and his hopes, in the fiftieth year of his age, and in the  
929. thirty-sixth from his accession to the throne.

He had by his first queen, Gefilie, married to Rollo, Duke of Normandy; and, by his third consort, a grand-daughter of the distinguished Alfred, Lewis, afterwards called to the throne of his ancestors.

Of


Of the character of Charles, surnamed the A. D. Simple, little need be said, as no appellation in history appears to have been applied with more truth than to this unfortunate Monarch. His crown sat so lightly upon his brows, that it would have been as easily plucked from thence by any pretender, as by the one who assumed his rights. He was not deficient in personal courage; nor is it apparent that he was destitute of the moral virtues; but, alas! they were at that period of little consequence to his authority. Had he possessed the same firmness in repelling the first encroachments of the ambitious Robert, as he evinced during a long and melancholy confinement; or had he taken the advantages that offered upon several occasions to overwhelm his enemies, he might have escaped the insults and disappointments which hastened to its conclusion a life distinguished, from the most early dawn of infancy, by misfortune, treachery, and rebellion.

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Relieved, by the death of this Prince, from a competitor not formidable in himself, but to be feared from the interested motives of him who held his person in captivity, Rodolph found the political field more open to his excursions. With a mind more at ease, he was better able to attend to his external enemies. He attacked the

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Normans,

 A. D. Normans, who were ravaging the neighbourhood of the Loire, with such vigour and success, as induced them to forbear their hostilities for the remainder of his reign: and this victory was of consequence to the internal tranquillity of his government, as it secured to him, from the gratitude of the people of Aquitaine, who had been ever ill-affected to his authority, a more willing obedience. He obliged Charles Constantine, the son of Lewis, King of Arles, to do him homage for the Viennois, which was all that Prince retained of his father's dominions; this kingdom being possessed by Hugh, another usurper. He endeavoured, but ineffectually, to restrain the private wars of individuals, now become so perpetual; yet he assisted Hugh the Great in a ruinous one against Herbert, which continued for several years, until the turbulent Count had lost the greater part of his patrimonial territories; and was indebted to the mediation of the Kings of Germany and Transjurane Burgundy, for the restitution of a small part of his late possessions; a salutary accommodation which saved France from the destructive inroads of the Hungarians, who had prepared to enter the kingdom—when, finding that these domestic contentions had been amicably settled, they turned their arms, and in a dreadful irruption desolated Italy.

This



This was the last event of the reign of Rodolph:—attacked by the pedicularian disorder, not uncommon in those times, he sunk into his grave, in the fourteenth year of his reign, without leaving any male heirs, and was succeeded in his Duchy of Burgundy by his half-brother, Hugh, surnamed the Black. A. D. 936.

The reign of an usurper is generally marked by outrage, and by blood: that of Rodolph was unremittingly engaged in scenes of warfare; but as he knew how to conduct them with prudence and vigour, he terminated them successfully—the general consequences of great exertions, but which usurpation can never sanctify. He maintained the dignity of the crown; and his valour protected his desolated country from its numerous enemies. During a reign of thirteen years, seated upon a throne to which he had no legal title, and surrounded by an aspiring and a powerful Nobility, he preserved the authority he had obtained; and, although it presents us with no unfavourable idea of his talents for government, it by no means authorises the indiscriminate praise that has been lavishly bestowed upon his name and memory.

A. D.


## CHAPTER XVI.

THE REIGNS OF LEWIS THE FOURTH, TRANSMARINE, LOTHAIRE, AND LEWIS THE FIFTH.

Hugh the Great recalls the lawful heir from England—Lewis the Fourth crowned—He bestows a part of Burgundy upon Hugh—Lewis joins the confederates against him—Civil war—A truce—the Gallic Monarch possesses himself of Lorraine—Espouses Gerberg, the sister of Otho, who recovers Lorraine—He joins the rebellious subjects of Lewis—And is acknowledged King of France—Defeats Lewis, who is again restored—William Duke of Normandy assassinated—The perfidious attempts of Lewis against his successor Richard—And the ill success of his projects—Taken prisoner by the Normans—Delivered into the hands of Hugh—Resigns Laon as the price of liberty—Otho and Lewis unite their forces against Hugh—Peace concluded—Death and Character of the King—Accession of Lothaire, and death of Hugh—The treachery of Lothaire to the Norman Duke—Espouses Emma—Of Otho, and the affairs of Italy—Dissensions in Lorraine—Charles receives a part of Lorraine, as the vassal of the Emperor—The fruitless successes of Lothaire—His death and character—Accession of Lewis the Fifth—Degrades Emma—His death—And the usurpation of Hugh Capet.


IT is difficult to penetrate into the motives that induced Hugh, the Duke of France, from aspiring to the vacant throne; but whether his ambition was gratified by being the first in rank in the kingdom; or whether, conceiving the crown despoiled of its authority, he found his

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own situation preferable to the precarious elevation;—he rather chose to raise a royal phantom, who, he flattered himself, would be wholly guided by his counsels. Lending therefore a favourable ear to the Duke of Normandy, who, urged by Athelstan the King of England, solicited him to exert his influence in restoring the son of Egiva; he, with the concurrence of his partisans, invited Lewis, surnamed the Trans-marine, from his residence in the English Court, to return to his native country; and he was received at Boulogne with every outward mark of respect, by the Duke of France, who assumed, upon this occasion, the title of governor to the young and inexperienced Monarch. A. D. 

The example of Hugh was followed by a numerous and respectable part of the Nobility and Clergy: the young Prince was conducted to Laon, and consecrated by the hands of Artaud, Archbishop of Rheims. After this ceremony, and accompanied by his adviser, he proceeded into Burgundy, obliged Hugh the Black, who, upon the death of Rodolph, had aspired to the crown, to surrender a portion of his domains, which he bestowed upon the Duke of France, and to take the oaths of fealty for what he permitted him to retain.

It was not long before Lewis, disgusted with the disgraceful tutelage of his ambitious subject, gave indications of a spirit befitting his elevated rank: encouraged by the promised sup-

A. D. port of the Duke of Normandy, the Counts of  Flanders, Vermandois, and Poitiers, he broke the bonds of his ignominious confinement, invited his mother, who was still in England, to repair to his court, and assist him with her counsels, and joined the confederate Lords, before Hugh had been apprised of his departure from Laon. But, as treachery throughout the life of Herbert had marked his conduct, he was as easily prevailed upon by the offers made him by the Duke of France to renounce his professions of loyalty, as he had been induced to make them; and the Norman Prince, led by his pernicious example, detached himself from the cause of Lewis. The rebellious vassals, over whom neither honour, justice, nor the oath of fidelity, which they had so recently taken, had operated, were arrested in their progress, when upon the point of determining their disputes by a conflict of arms, by the spiritual denunciations of the prelates in the army of their Sovereign: a negotiation took place; and a suspension of hostilities for the space of a few months, was consented to by the contending parties.

Upon this cessation of arms, the active mind of Lewis meditated a recovery of Lorraine: encouraged by the revolt of Giselbert, the Duke of that province, he repaired thither, and was almost universally acknowledged by the Nobility. Having been obliged to quit his conquests, to  
punish

punish the treachery of the Bishop of Laon, in league to deliver up that city to Herbert; the Dukes of Lorraine and Franconia, to whom he had left the support of his interest, suffered themselves to be surpris'd by the German troops, and fell the victims of their unguarded conduct. Lewis hastened to the scene of action, rescued Gerberge, the widow of Giselbert, who had been confined by the successful party; and, the better to preserve the influence she might retain in that country, soon after espoused her: but Otho, the German Monarch, having established a temporary tranquillity in his dominions, dispelled, by his presence, the factious parties in Lorraine, and recovered, with as much ease as it had been lost, the quiet possession of that province.

The fruitless exertions of the young King were yet more unfavourable in their consequences; and the power of the confederacy was increased by the aid of Otho, who, provoked at this late attempt, entered into an alliance with his disaffected subjects. Hugh, and the Count of Vermandois, besieged the city of Rheims, whose Bishop, highly in the confidence of Lewis, had been allowed the dangerous and signal privilege of coining in his own domains. Having compelled the Prelate to resign his lucrative diocese, they proceeded to Laon. A vigorous defence gave the King time to advance to the relief of the town. Baffled in their attempt, they repaired to meet



A. D. { the King of Germany at Attigny, and, in return  
941. for his promised support, acknowledged him their  
sovereign.

Defeated near Laon by the forces of Otho, the French Monarch with difficulty secured himself a retreat in the territories of Constantine, Count of Vienne, a descendant, like himself, of the illustrious Charlemagne. From hence, by negociation, and the threatened excommunications of Pope Stephen the Eighth, whose interference he had solicited, he prevailed upon the Duke of Normandy to detach himself from his opponents; and Otho, a prince of generosity and abilities, although he had been recognised King of France, united his mediation with the Duke, to re-establish the authority of his rival; and the turbulent vassals consented once more to receive their lawful Sovereign.

This salutary peace had been chiefly effected by William, surnamed Longsword, Duke of Normandy; but the assassination of this liberal and virtuous Prince, by the intrigues of Arnold, Count of Flanders, in a treacherous conference held at Perpigny upon the Somme, was the prelude of sanguinary consequences, and new commotions. Lewis, forgetting the dignity of his rank, and the recent services of the Duke, prepared to avail himself of the tender years of his son. Having induced the Normans to confide to his care the person of Richard, their young sovereign,

A. D.

942.

reign, he, under the pretext of attending to his education, and watching over his welfare, conveyed him to his seat of residence in the city of Laon: but the plans he had meditated, to regain the possession of Normandy, were too ill concealed to elude the penetrative eye of Osmond, the governor of the young Prince.

Fearing for the life of his pupil, who was carefully guarded by the emissaries of the King, he caused him to be secretly removed from the palace in a truss of hay, and conducted in safety to his maternal uncle, Bernard, Count of Senlis, who, anxious for the faithful discharge of the trust reposed in him, equally refused to deliver him to the artful insinuations of Lewis, as to the precarious protection of his Norman subjects, and prevailed upon the Duke of France to avow himself his protector. But, as interest was evidently more predominant than honour in the bosom of Hugh, he suffered himself to be seduced, abandoned his recent promises, in consideration of sharing the spoils, and determined, in concert with the Gallic Monarch, to divest the young Duke of his dominions.

With a powerful army, and a success equal to their wishes, they soon became masters of nearly the whole of the Duchy; and Lewis advanced to Rouen. The Normans, unable to withstand his superior force, affected to be willing to submit to his authority; and Bernard, the Dane, at the head of their councils, easily prevailed upon the French

A. D. 945. French King to forego the promises he had made, to retain the province in dispute, and recall Hugh from the part he had subdued; a feint that fully answered his most sanguine expectations. The Duke of France complied with the royal order, but withdrew, fully bent upon receiving an indemnification for his disgrace, and entered into a negociation with the Norman Lords.

Lewis, flattered by the apparent zeal of his new subjects, ventured to rely upon their assistance, and to give battle to a large force commanded by Haringold, a Danish Prince, who had been invited to the assistance of Richard. He was, as it may readily be conceived, betrayed and defeated; and, in attempting to escape from the field of conflict, was seized and confined at Rouen, until Hugh, at the intercession of Gerberg, his queen, obtained his liberty. Richard was re-established in his Duchy; the second son of the King, with two Bishops, were the hostages for the performance of the treaty; and the captive Monarch, delivered by his enemies into the hands of the Duke of France, was detained twelve months longer in confinement by his presumptuous subject, until he consented to resign the long-contested city of Laon, and which with its district comprised nearly the extent of the royal domains.

About this time the death of Herbert, Count of Vermandois, released Lewis from one of the many turbulent vassals that disturbed the tranquillity

quillity of his government. Stung with the recollection of his treason to Charles the Simple, and to his son, he incessantly exclaimed in his last hours—"Alas! I was but one of the twelve who betrayed the King!"—He may truly be said to have been the firebrand of France; and his sons, of which he left several, appear to have been equally excited by the flame of discord and ambition. The resentment of Lewis, who endeavoured to punish the perfidy of the father upon his children, precipitated him into measures which he had not resources to prosecute with success, and produced another long and destructive war, that neither humbled Hugh, who was ever united with his enemies, nor served to increase his own authority, although supported by the assistance of the Kings of Germany and Burgundy, with that of Arnold, the Count of Flanders.

Their united forces, which have been computed at one hundred and eighty thousand men, it was natural to suppose, might have exterminated the disproportioned numbers of his opponents: but, as great bodies move slowly, their success corresponded not with the formidable appearance they made. The capture of Rheims, the exile of Hugh the son of Herbert from that diocese, the re-establishment of Artaud, and the destructive ravages of the Duchy of France, were the only favourable events

A. D.  
946—51.

A. D. events of this mighty armament.—They besieged Rouen, which was gallantly defended against their arms: the desertion of the Count of Flanders, and a prodigious slaughter of a detachment of Saxons, with their leader, the nephew of Otho, assisted by the heavy rains which deluged their camps, compelled them to abandon this unfortunate enterprise.

The war continued with so much obstinacy for several years, that Lewis, whose partisans were gradually declining, had recourse to the spiritual authority of the Pope, who appointed a Legate to inquire into the disorders of the kingdom. By the advice of the Bishops, an assembly was convoked at Ingelheim, where Otho and Lewis attended in person; and the Duke of France was cited to appear, that the merits of the disputes might be canvassed: this he refused to comply with. The long-contested diocese of Rheims was adjudged by the Council to appertain to Artaud; and both the Duke of France, and Hugh, the son of Herbert, who had held that see, were excommunicated. The thunder of the Vatican failed in its effect; hostilities continued, and many strong places were alternately taken and lost. A hasty peace, or rather a truce of short duration, was followed by new commotions; nor is it requisite to dwell upon events so little capable to interest curiosity, or excite reflexion, and which may be passed over without mutilating



tilating the events of those turbulent times. A. D. Hugh, who saw no real advantages resulting from these perpetual commotions, was at length prevailed upon by the German Monarch to renew his oaths of allegiance, to restore Laon to his sovereign; and by these means a temporary calm ensued. 951—4.

The interval of tranquillity was employed by Lewis in regulating the affairs of Aquitaine; for such had been the disorders of that province, and so versatile the allegiance of the people, that they did homage to several masters in the course of a year; and also in repelling the incursions of the Hungarians, who had advanced with dreadful devastations into the province of Picardy.

The latter years of the life of this Prince were disturbed by the insults of Hugh and his partisans, whom he had so long ineffectually struggled to overcome, and whom he could never reduce to perfect obedience; and by the marriage of his mother with Herbert, Count of Troyes, a son of the Count of Vermandois, who had detained her former husband so many years in captivity.

Induced by the recent death of a favourite son to quit Laon, with an intention to fix his residence at Rheims,—when near the city, he perceived a wolf, which he ventured to pursue at full speed: his horse fell, and he was taken up so much wounded by the violence of the concussion, that he expired immediately after having

A. D. having been conveyed to the palace of the Archbishop, in the thirty-fourth year of his age, and in the nineteenth of his reign; a period of time in which he had scarcely enjoyed one interval of tranquillity. Of five sons, which he had by Gerberg, the daughter of Henry the Fowler, and sister of Otho, two survived him, Lothaire and Charles; a daughter, Matilda, married to Conrad, King of Burgundy; and another, Alpaide, who became the wife of Renaud, Count Roucy.

This Monarch was by no means devoid of manly qualifications: he gave early indications of a spirit of enterprise, and firmness of mind; and proved himself upon trying occasions to be an intrepid, and politic, prince. If in his public character there were some actions entitled to praise, in his private conduct there is not any thing to commend, but much to censure: perfidious and ungrateful, his moral deviations were not calculated to inspire confidence, or entitle him to the attachment of his adherents.

At his accession, his kingdom was weakened by the disorders that had dismembered its strength, and undermined its foundation; and it required a head more fruitful in resources, and a heart more inured to discipline and action, to cement the melting mass, and to arrest the progress of a decay, that was hastening by rapid strides to a premature and a disgraceful end.

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Lothaire, associated by his father in the regal A. D.  
dignity some years before his death, was prob- 955.  
ably indebted to that precaution for his quiet  
accession to the vacant throne: whatever might  
have been the intentions of the Duke of France,  
they could not, after that ceremony, have been  
so safely avowed; nor was the kingdom, as had  
been the usual practice, divided between the  
brothers. A recent example had occurred in  
Germany, where Otho had succeeded to the  
whole sovereignty held by Henry the Fowler,  
although he had left other sons; and this per-  
nicious partition of the regal authority, which  
had subsisted from the reign of Clovis, has  
never since been resumed by the successors to  
the throne of France.

Not less the possessor of the sovereign authority,  
than if his brows had been encircled by the dia-  
dem, the aspiring Hugh assumed the absolute  
direction of the councils of the young King,  
who had scarcely attained his fifteenth year, and  
whom he accompanied to Rheims, there to re-  
ceive from the hands of Artaud, the prelate of  
that diocese, the sacred unction. To the nume-  
rous honours that had been lavished upon the  
Duke of France, he was gratified by the addi-  
tional title of Duke of Aquitaine; and having  
entertained his royal guest with a profuse and  
splendid hospitality in Paris, the ancient capital  
of the kingdom, a city that had been long lost

A. D. 956. to the government of the Carlovingian Princes, he proceeded with him into Aquitaine, to dispossess William the second, Count of Poitiers, of that province; a nobleman whose family had been distinguished among the few faithful adherents to the descendants of Charlemagne. The city of Poitiers was in vain besieged by his opponent; and in the succeeding year, Hugh the Great, when preparing to renew his hostile intentions, was seized with a malignant distemper, and expired, at an advanced period of life, overwhelmed with honours, at Dourdon; and who, without having possessed the regal title, had enjoyed the supreme power for the space of twenty years. He is indiscriminately mentioned, in the French history, by the distinctive appellations of—the White, from the fairness of his complexion; the Great, from the height of his stature; the Prince, from his extent of authority; and the Abbot, from the rich establishments he held of St. Denis, St. Germain des Prez, and St. Martin of Tours.

Upon this distinguished character, whose son was destined to wear the crown, and who gave to France a race of Princes still seated on her throne, it may be proper to dwell with more particularity of description. With the valuable abbeys above related, he held the Duchies of Burgundy and France, which comprehended many

many extensive counties, and consequently enabled him to command the services of a number of rear vassals, whose lands were within the precincts of his domains : nor was he less powerful in domestic alliances than in extent of territories ; being connected either by birth or marriage, to the principal families of the kingdom : and royalty had already graced the brows of Eudes and Robert, his uncle and his father. Ethelinde, the daughter of Edward the elder, King of England, had been his first consort ; and by his third, Hedwiga, the sister of Otho, King of Germany, he left four sons—Hugh, surnamed Capet, Otho, Eudes, and Henry, to the protection of Richard, Duke of Normandy, upon whom he had bestowed his daughter Emma. He appears to have been possessed of considerable abilities, but not of a nature to merit the extraordinary eulogium that has been lavishly bestowed upon his memory : his ungovernable ambition stood forth a prominent feature in his character ; and that passion he gratified, at the expence of justice, honour, and the tranquillity of his country.

The young King, who resided chiefly at Laon, which, with a few royal palaces, made nearly the extent of his dominions, and which scarcely afforded a decent subsistence for his court, continued there the inactive spectator of the private, and often sanguinary wars of his subjects, with-

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A. D.  
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A. D. out either the authority to repress, or the influence to conciliate their dissensions.

Bruno, Archbishop of Cologne, intrusted by Otho, his brother, with the government of Lorraine, and equally united by the ties of consanguinity to the sons of Lewis Transmarine, as to those of the late Duke of France, prevailed upon Hugh Capet to quit the protection of the Norman Court for that of Laon, and to take the oath of fealty to his Sovereign: gratified by his youthful confidence, Lothaire confirmed to him the titles of Duke of France, and Aquitaine, which his father had borne; and actuated by a different policy, the young Duke was as steady in his attachment to the son, as Hugh the Great had been active in promoting the debasement of the father.

The restoration of Normandy to the crown was equally the object of the ambition of Lothaire, as it had been that of Lewis. Twice the unwary Richard had nearly fallen a victim to his credulity, when timely intimation of his impending danger rescued him from the snares of his treacherous rival; but as it became impracticable to succeed by perfidy, his dominions were openly invaded; and a war, as fruitless as it was destructive, was terminated by the restoration of what had been wrested from the Duke by the French Monarch: and, to purchase the retreat of the Northern powers, which had been  
called

called in to the assistance of Richard, the wealth of both kingdoms was as necessarily as disgracefully lavished. A. D.  
961.

From this period, Lothaire enjoyed, for several years, a portion of tranquillity unmarked by any event, but an expedition into Flanders, in which he made himself master of Arras and Douay, and obliged Baldwin the Third, Count of that province, to acknowledge his superiority; which having obtained, he restored to him the territories he had recently taken. Upon his return he repaired to Cologne, to espouse Emma, daughter of Lothaire, the late King of Italy, whom he received from the hands of the Emperor Otho, who had himself taken for the partner of his throne, Adelaide, the widow of that Sovereign. 965.

This illustrious Prince, furnamed the Great, and the restorer of the Western empire, had four years before this period received the Imperial honours at Rome, and is generally considered as the first German Emperor. Italy, torn by faction, had alternately submitted to various competitors. Rodolph the Second, King of Transjurane Burgundy, had dethroned the Duke of Friuli, and had been himself obliged to retire, from the superior power of Hugh, Count, or King, of Arles. The like fate awaited him from Berenger the Second, whose tyranny,

**A. D.** with that of his son Adelbert, induced the Pope to solicit the protection of the King of Germany. The licentious John the Twelfth then filled the Papal chair, a Roman Patrician by birth, and the first who changed his name upon his elevation to that dignity: he had been elected to that station, at the age of eighteen, by the influence of his family connexions, without having, or probably intending to embrace the clerical life. Otho was not tardy in affording the required support; he repaired to Italy, and soon became the acknowledged Sovereign of that country: proceeding to Rome, he was there invested with the Imperial honours, with the accustomed ceremonies; and, like his great predecessor in that dignity, confirmed to the Holy See the donations that had been made by that Sovereign, with the same limited restrictions, "Saving in all things," said he, "our authority, and that of our son and "descendants." But the Emperor had no sooner left the city, than the Pope, probably foreseeing a master in his protector, entered into an alliance with his former enemy Adelbert, and instigated the Hungarians to invade Germany. The inconstancy of the Roman people was twice chastised by the resentment of the Sovereign they had elected; and Otho, during his residence at Pavia, renewed the ancient alliance between the Eastern and Western Empires that had been so long

long neglected by the successors of Charle- A. D.  
magne. 973.

Upon the death of this Prince, the dissensions that ensued in Lorraine, aroused the attention of the French Monarch, who was not insensible to the hereditary claim he had to that kingdom. Possessed of considerable interest from the domains he enjoyed in right of Gerberg, the queen-mother, in that country, he resigned to Charles, his brother, those territories, that he might be enabled to ferment the private feuds of the Nobles who were not well affected to the Imperial government. Otho the Second, surnamed the Sanguinary, embarrassed by his German subjects, and clearly penetrating the meditated plans of Lothaire, by an artful stroke of policy circumvented his projects, and sowed the seeds of discord between the brothers, by an offer to Charles of the possession of the Lower Lorraine, comprehending Brabant, and the country from the Rhine and the Escaut to the ocean; upon the consideration of receiving from him no further molestation, and that he should likewise consent to hold that principality as his vassal, and take the oaths of fealty to the Imperial Crown. This Prince, who had reluctantly continued his residence at the Court of Laon, without appointments adequate to his rank, received with eagerness the offered boon, and fixed the seat of his government at Brussels.

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A. D. 978. Exasperated at this unexpected league, so inconsistent with the interest and dignity of his crown, the French Monarch entered the Upper Lorraine, burning with resentment; seized upon Metz, and proceeded with such secret rapidity to Aix-la-Chapelle, that he surprised the Emperor as he was engaged in the pleasures of the table, and scarcely gave him time to secure his personal safety: the city was abandoned to pillage, and the adjacent country laid waste. In return for these devastations, Otho retaliated upon the unfortunate inhabitants of his rival's dominions, with an army of sixty thousand men, which carried their destructive ravages as far as the gates of Paris, and prepared to besiege the city: after many idle gasconades, he was however obliged, by Hugh Capet, to abandon his enterprise; and, with the assistance of the Count of Anjou, Lothaire assailed him in his retreat, destroyed the most considerable part of his army, and possessed himself of a large portion of Lorraine. But these successes were not attended by any advantage to the victor, who could not retain his vassals in the field, and who had not troops to preserve the acquisitions he had made; he therefore found himself necessitated to accede to a treaty he was not in a situation to reject, in which the Emperor preserved the contested province, and consented to acknowledge its possession as a fief of the Gallic Crown.

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Upon the death of that Prince, the French <sup>A. D.</sup> Monarch affected to support his son Otho the <sup>984—6.</sup> Third, against the intrigues of the Duke of Bavaria; but his meditated plans were evident in the seizure of Verdun: nor was it improbable that, had he lived, he would have taken the advantage of the youthful years of the Emperor, and re-annexed Lorraine to his dominions; but in the ensuing year his projects were arrested by the hand of death, and he breathed his last at Rheims, in the forty-sixth year of his age, and the thirty-second of his reign. It was conjectured that he was taken off by poison, administered by his Queen, a report strengthened by the Duke of Lorraine, whose inveteracy towards Emma he had afterwards some cause to repent; but this surmise appears to have been indiscriminately given to every prince, from the death of Charles the Bald, and may not have been without foundation in such times of discord and confusion. He left one son, Lewis, his successor to the throne, who had been acknowledged some years before his death; and Arnold, an illegitimate son, who was afterwards Archbishop of Rheims.

The character of this Prince has been variously represented: he has been allowed the praise of having been able to unite the Nobles, and preserve their obedience; whilst it is asserted by others that he took but little pains to conciliate their affections, and that he encouraged

**A. D.** encouraged their private disputes, to augment his personal influence, by becoming the mediator of their respective altercations. He certainly preserved a more internal tranquillity than his predecessors had done; and had at least the ability to acquire the support of the great vassals, which they were not able to obtain. He was perfidious—the leading vice of the times; a warlike Prince, active in his public capacity, and attentive to the subordinate affairs of the State, but with such limited powers, as rendered it impossible to effect the restoration of the regal authority which he had projected.

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With the succession to his dominions, Lewis inherited not the abilities of Lothaire: restless, and impetuous in his passions, he had been intrusted, and warmly commended, to the fidelity and support of the Duke of France, who, with an interest not less powerful than had been that of his father, possessed an ambition equally predominant, but better concealed by a natural mildness and moderation of character. The young Sovereign, by his direction, was again crowned at Rheims; and his short reign passed off, unmarked by any event, but the irreconcilable enmity with which he pursued his mother Emma. Adalberon, Bishop  
of

of Laon, he accused of criminal intrigues with A. D. that Princess, and compelled him to leave the kingdom. The degraded Queen had already <sup>987.</sup> aroused the German Court to espouse her cause, when Lewis was summoned from a world in which he had been allotted so short a span, in the twentieth year of his age, without having given any indications of talents that promised tranquillity to himself, or virtues that could have been beneficial to his country. He was surnamed the Fainéant, rather applied to the little that had been done in his short reign, than to any personal defects. By Blanch, his queen, he left not any children: and it has been suggested, as she had given him early marks of her disgust, that she had shortened his life by poison; an imputation attributed by others to the arts of the licentious Emma!

Thus, with Lewis the Fifth, closed the regal power of the last Prince who swayed the sceptre of the Carlovingian line, whose splendid commencement promised a more lengthened duration, than its degraded career, and its ultimate extinction, in the short space of two hundred and thirty-six years: so frail is all temporal grandeur, and such the little stress that is to be placed upon human ambition, the pride of descent, and the continuance of hereditary exaltation! United in one mighty mass, it maintained its height of glory; divided into small portions, it was reduced

A. D. 987. to nothing ! From a dominion extending over a third of Europe, contracted, before its final close, to the narrow domains of Laon and Soissons ; nor was that portion, small as it was, enjoyed without care, and preserved without molestation.

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Having attempted to delineate the most striking revolutions, and to record the most memorable events of the History of France, including a period of more than seven hundred years, it would not be an unprofitable speculation to dwell upon the virtues, and to analyse the vices of those who have held the reins of government ; but, as in politics, the passions of men are too often suffered to influence the judgment, we shall content ourselves, in this place, with hazarding a few general remarks, without wishing to draw conclusions from traditionary reports, or historical illustrations.

Upon a careful review of history, either ancient or modern, we cannot help being surpris'd at the fluctuation of public opinions, the instability of worldly grandeur, and the short duration of human life. The vicissitudes of fortune are sufficiently numerous and important to depress the ardour of ambition, and to evince the futility of depending,  
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with exaggerated zeal, upon that glory, which, A. D. however bright at one period, may soon be involved in obscurity, or sink into a sudden and eternal night.

The ambition of Clovis, the moderation of Pepin, and the rigour of Charlemagne, were not sufficient to prevent the empires which they had formed from crumbling into dust; and the political declension of the power of the first, and the decay of the authority of the last, were seen to commence under the weak and turbulent reigns of their immediate successors. The efforts that were made to prevent them from a total annihilation, present to the view a series of measures, and a variety of events, disgraced by atrocities the most inhuman, and by conquests not less reprehensible than indecisive.

An extension of empire has always proved a baneful error in the system of politics; and in no instances more fatally illustrated, than in the history of those ages which have so lately passed under review. The more a prince enlarges his dominions, the more he extends the necessary sphere of his anxiety and cares, and the more is left open the field of ingratitude, of treachery, and of crimes. Not being able to exert his vigilance, and to give effect to his decrees, the power entrusted to his ministers is too generally abused; and he becomes unpopular, degraded, or

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dethroned,



~ A. D. dethroned, on account of the vices, the despotism, and the inhumanity of others.


The errors of kings are too often dwelt upon with invidious aggravation, while their good qualities are suffered to be passed over in silence, or to be regarded through a mirror that dazzles, although it leaves the brilliant object unobserved. The artificial character which royalty is obliged to assume, prevents the sovereign from being intimately known himself, at the same time that it precludes the opportunity of his being able to discover the sincerity of others: hence arises that diversity of sentiment, and that dubiety of conduct, which have so frequently led to the depression of the people, and to the destruction of empires.

Their private virtues, from the infrequency of their existence, are not always regarded with such enthusiasm as to ensure an imitation from those who surround them; nor are their vices considered as a reason sufficiently cogent for the rejection of their favours: for, whatever may be the fastidious opinion of those who inveigh against the complacency of courts, there are but few who would not forego their independency when their interest is awakened by emolument, and their ambition flattered by the attainment of honours. Rewards and punishments being indiscriminately confided to one person, the power of bestowing the one, and the necessity of inflicting the other, must

must necessarily excite a struggle in the mind ; A. D. and when the laws are sufficiently strong in themselves to convict the guilty, why should they not remove from the sovereign the most painful part of his magisterial functions ? that awful fiat, that imposes upon a fellow-creature, although a just, yet the tremendous sentence of death.

As a king is seated upon the throne to watch over the safety, and to be the guardian of the happiness of his people, he should sedulously and religiously reflect upon the sacred charge with which he has been entrusted ; their comfort and prosperity being dependent upon his paternal, and equally upon his political care, he should accurately ascertain their wants and enjoyments, and be contented to make himself a partaker of both ; and while he thus acts up to the character with which he is invested, he is entitled, like the father of a family, to the dutiful support, as to the love and veneration of his subjects.

If monarchs be called the vice-gerents of God, they are still liable to the mortifications of human life ; and did not their educations exempt them from a peculiar modification and sensibility of feeling, they would, upon a review of their appointments, and from a consciousness of what is expected from their situations, be the most wretched and the most pitiable beings upon earth. Theirs being a painful pre-eminence, is entitled to

 A. D. to candid allowances, and, viewed in this light, their errors ought to be considered as those attached to humanity, and their virtues acknowledged to be inherently their own.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



